



**710**

**INSTITUTE OF  
CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION**

**I  
N  
D  
I  
A  
N**

**M  
U  
S  
I  
C**

**B.A. Degree Course**

**Second Year**

**INDIAN MUSIC**

**Allied Subject—II**

**INDIAN CULTURE AND MUSIC**

**PACKAGE—I**

## **WELCOME**

Dear Student,

We welcome you as a student of the Second Year B.A. Degree Course in Indian Music.

This subject deals with Allied Subject—II, Indian Culture and Music which you will have to study in the Second Year of the Course.

The learning materials for this paper will be sent to you periodically and supplemented by a few contact lectures.

You must be aware that learning through correspondence involves a great deal of self-study. We hope that you will put in your whole-hearted efforts.

On our part we assure you of our help in guiding you throughout the course.

Wish you all success.

**DIRECTOR**

### **Allied Subject—II**

#### **LITERARY HERITAGE:**

Vedas; Upanishads; Vedangas; Upavedas; Dharmasastra; Itihasa; Puranas; Darsanas; Agama; Tantra; Mantra.

Tolkappiyam; Ettuttogai; Pattuppattu; Five main Kappiyams; Tirukkural; Works of Alvars; Nayanmars and Siddhars; poetic works of Kambar; Tayumanavar and Ramalingaswami.

#### **THE ARTS:**

Concept of 64 kalas.

Ancient Indian Architecture, Sculpture and Painting. Musical Instruments in Sculpture; Ragamala Paintings.

Theatrical Arts—The Natya of Bharata; Kudiyaattam; Yakshagana; Bhagavatamela Nataka; Terukkuttu; Jatra; Nautanki; Ankiya—Nat; Tamasha; Shadow Theatre.

Styles of Indian dancing—Bharatanatya; Kathakali; Kathak; Manipuri; Odissi.

Katha tradition—Maharashtra Kirtana; Harikatha; Villuppattu.

Music in the above mentioned Arts.

Bhakti and Music—Saint singers from various parts of India.

The place of music in the religious festivals and social functions in India.

Distinctive features of Indian Classical Music.

## MUSIC IN MODERN INDIA;

**Music and mass media** - All India Radio, Doordarshan.

Institutions for the promotion of music—Sangeet Natak Akademi; Private organisations—Sabhas—Award of titles; **Music conferences**; Festivals of Music Composers.

**Music and Education**—Gurukula and Institutional system.

**Indian Cinema and Music.**

**Famous musicians of 20th Century**—Karnatic and Hindustani.

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED:

1. Indian Heritage : V. Raghavan.
2. The Wonder that was India : A. L. Basham.
3. Introduction to Indian Art : Ananda Comaraswamy.
4. The Tamils and their Culture : K. S. Ramaswamy Sastry
5. Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu : Percy Brown.
6. Indian Painting : Percy Brown.
7. Indian Sculpture : Stella Kramrisch.
8. The Great Integrators : The Saint Singers of India - V. Raghavan.
9. Indian Classical Dance : Kapila Vatsyayan.
10. Studies in Indian Dance : R. Sathyanarayana.
11. Bharata Natya : R. Sathyanarayana.
12. Musical Instruments in Indian Sculpture : G. H. Tarlekar and Nalini Tarlekar.
13. Indian Theatre : Adya Rangacharya.
14. Introduction of Indian Music : B. C. Deva.
15. Musical Instruments of India : S. Krishnaswami.
16. Aspects of Indian Music—(AIR Symposium, Publications Division) (Relevant articles).

17. Music, East and West : I. C. C. R. Publication (Relevant articles).
18. Lesser known Forms of Performing Arts in India: Edited by Durgadas Mukhopadhyay.
19. Traditional Indian Theatre—Multiple Streams: By Kapila Vatsyayan, Publications Division.
20. A Guide to Kathakali : David Bolland — Publications Division.
21. Indian Painting — C. Sivaramamurti: Publications Division.
22. The Heritage of Indian Art : Vasudeva S. Agarwala—Publications Division.



### III. SCHEME OF LESSONS

Lesson No.	Topics
1.	Literary Heritage — (a) Vedas, (b) Upanishads, (c) Vedangas, (d) Upavedas.
2.	„ — (a) Dharmasastra, (b) Itihasa, (c) Puranas.
3.	„ — (a) Darsanas, (b) Agamas, (c) Tantra, (d) Mantra.
4.	„ — (a) Tolkappiyam, (b) Ettuttogai.
5.	„ — (a) Pattuppattu, (b) Five main Kappiyams, (c) Tirukkural.
6.	„ — (a) Works of Alvars, (b) Nayanmars, (c) Siddhars.
7.	„ — Poetic works of — (a) Kambar, (b) Tayumanavar, (c) Ramalinga-swami.
8.	The Arts — Concept of 64 kalas.
9.	„ — Ancient Indian Architecture, Sculpture and Painting.
10.	„ — (a) Musical Instruments in Sculpture, (b) Ragamala Paintings.
11.	„ — Theatrical Arts — (a) The Natya of Bharata, (b) Kudiyyattam, (c) Yakshagana, (d) Bhagavatamela nataka, — Music in these arts.
12.	„ — Theatrical Arts — (a) Terukkuttu, (b) Jatra, (c) Nautanki, (d) Ankiya Nat, (e) Tammasha, (f) Shadow Theater, — Music in these arts.

13.	„	— Styles of Indian dancing — (a) Bharatanatya, (b) Kathakali, (c) Kathak, (d) Manipuri, (e) Odissi, — Music in these dances.
14.	„	— Katha tradition — (a) Maharashtra Kirtana, (b) Hari-katha, (c) Villuppattu — Music in these arts.
15.	„	— Bhakti and Music — Saint Singers from various parts of India.
16.	„	— The place of Music in the Religious festivals and social functions in India.
17.	„	— Distinctive features of Indian Classical Music.
18.	Music in Modern India	— Music and mass media — All India Radio — Doordarshan.
19.	„	— Institutions for the promotion of music— Sangeet Natak Academies; Private organisations — Sabhas — Award of titles; Music conferences; Festivals of Music composers.
20.	„	— Music and Education — Gurukula and Institutional system.
21.	„	— Indian Cinema and Music.
22.	„	— Famous musicians of 20th Century — Karnatic and Hindustani.

## IV. OVERVIEW

This package of learning materials deals with the following lessons:

1. Literary Heritage — (a) Vedas (b) Upanishads  
(c) Vedangas (d) Upavedas
2. „ — (a) Dharmasastra (b) Itihasa  
(c) Puranas
3. „ — (a) Darsanas (b) Agamas  
(c) Tantra (d) Mantra
4. „ — (a) Tolkappiyam (b) Ettuttogai
5. „ — (a) Pattuppattu (b) Five Main  
Kappiyams (c) Tirukkural
6. „ — Works of: (a) Alwars  
(b) Nayanmars (c) Siddhars
7. „ — Poetic works of: (a) Kambar  
(b) Tayumanavar  
(c) Ramalingaswami



## V. STUDY UNIT

### LESSON—1

#### LITERARY HERITAGE

##### INTRODUCTION:

Culture has been defined as the behaviour patterns, beliefs, institutions, arts and all such other products produced by human activity and thought that is characteristic of a community. In short one can say that culture is the intellectual and artistic activity of a society. Mathew Arnold has rightly said that “The aim of Culture is to set ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and how to make it prevail”. Nehru has said that “Culture is the widening of the mind and that of the spirit”. Hence the Culture of any country encompasses within itself all the religious, philosophical, social and artistic aspects of the society and it should contribute to the broadening of the mind and spirit.

The Culture of any country depends on its geographical location also. India with all its majestic mountains, perennial rivers and glorious cities has been one of the foremost countries in contributing to the growth of culture. Indians have viewed the Himalayan mountains as the abode of Siva. In fact the other mountains also are associated with one deity or the other. Similarly the rivers and the cities too have been associated with divine personalities and hence considered as holy places. Thus geographically India was well suited for the growth of an indigenous culture.

For an understanding of a country's culture a study of the literary output is also necessary. The literature that builds up a healthy mind, by inculcating the mental discipline, by making us understand the glory, beauty and splendour of nature, the human nature and the spirit behind it, can truly be considered as worthy of study and emulation. In ancient India, highest place was given to the study of the Veda-s since this forms the main source for understanding Indian Culture. Any other branch of knowledge that developed subsequently was either directly or indirectly influenced by the Veda-s. The Vedas and the treatises written consequently constitute a huge bulk, and it is staggering in volume and variety.

Here in the following lessons we shall try to study briefly the Veda-s, the Upanishad-s and the Upaveda-s. This study will be mainly oriented to the cultural aspects with special emphasis on music and musical instruments.

### (a) VEDAS .

India is well known for its rich and varied contribution to Philosophy, Religion, Literature and Fine Arts which form the different facets of culture. In reality culture is the intellectual and artistic activity of a nation. It should also lead to the broadening of the mind and to the uplift of the self. As already elucidated in the introduction, any Culture has its roots in the way of living of the people. Each culture has its own individuality characterised by the particular social and artistic expression which belongs to that society or group of people.

India's contribution to world culture is immeasurable. The way the nation thought, the way they lived and the beliefs they had, all these are recorded since long in the Vedas. We find in the Vedas, the richest gifts to humanity, thought provoking concepts and beautiful descriptions of Gods, social and moral principles and relation of god to man and worldly objects.

Thus the Vedas form one of the earliest sources of ancient Indian Culture. These have influenced to a great extent, the religious, philosophical and in general the cultural life of the Indian people for more than 3000 years. Without a knowledge of the Veda-s it is absolutely impossible for one to get an insight into the spiritual life and thought of the Hindus. Buddhism and Jainism though they have not accepted the authority of the Veda-s still they adopted the ascetic practices and the mythology of the Veda-s with suitable adaptations and alterations.

Veda literally means 'knowledge', 'the knowledge par-excellence' or 'sacred knowledge'. Veda according to orthodox point of view is 'Truth' or Divine revelation.

Yajnavalkya, a sage has defined Veda thus - It enlightens one of the knowledge of supra-sensible matter which lie beyond the domain of perception and inference. Hence it is called the 'Veda'.

प्रत्यक्षेणानुमित्या वा यस्तूपायो न बुध्यते ।

एनं विदन्ति वेदेन तस्मात् वेदस्य वेदता ॥

Manu speaks about the Veda as a treasure house of all religious duties. Thus the importance of Veda-s has been spoken of by ancients.

The Vedic literature consists of four parts viz., Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

The Samhitas or mantras are collections of Suktas or hymns used in sacrifices and when offerings are made. These mantras or collections of hymns, prayers, benedictions, incantations and sacrificial formula are arranged into groups and put in a single book. These hymns were revealed at different periods by different sages.

The Brahmanas are mostly in prose. They contain detailed descriptions of the sacrificial rites and the modes of their performance. There are eight classes of topics in the Brahmanas viz., Itihasa, purana, vidya, upanishad, sloka, sutra, vyakhyana and anuvyakhyana, i.e., history, old stories, knowledge about meditation, supreme knowledge, verses, aphorisms, explanations and elaborations.

The Brahmanas explain the connection between the Suktas and ceremonies i.e., the Mantras found in the Veda-s and their connections with the sacrifices and other rituals. They contain directions for rituals. To prove the effect of these rituals many illustrative stories are given and philosophical observations on these are made.

Thus these Brahmanas contain explanations of the mantras and practical directions for the conduct of sacrifices. They also explain the duties to be performed by the four priests.

1. Hota — Rgvedin
2. Udgata — Samavedin
3. Adhvaryu — Yajurvedin
4. Brahmā — Atharvavedin

They also explain the symbolical meaning of the rituals. Each Veda has one or more Brahmanas attached to it and there are many interesting legends and thoughts recorded in them.

The Samhita and the Brahmana portions together are known as Karma Kanda ( कर्मकाण्ड ) since they are mainly connected with sacrifices and other rituals.

The Aranyakas are known as Upāsanākanda and the Upanishads as Jñānakanda.

The Aranyakas or Books of the forests are given at the end of the Brahmanas. They represent a further development of Vedic literature. In them there are instructions for the meditation of mystic symbols which, owing to their great sanctity, are meant to be communicated to the pupil by the teacher in the solitude of the forest. They are meant for the purified souls who have retired to the forest and who no longer perform sacrifices.

Upanishads, which are philosophical in nature, are called as atmakanda or the crown of the Veda. They contain the Brahavidya or the science of Brahman.

They are mostly the chapters found in the end of the Aranyakas. The Upanishadic chapters of these have fortunately survived though many texts have been lost. About 250 Upanishads are available to us at present. They belong to one Veda or the other. But Sankaracharya has recognised only sixteen of them as authentic.

The Upanishads are devoted entirely to the religious and philosophical speculations of the nature of the things. They mark practically the last stage of the development of Vedic literature. They are also known as Vedānta.

#### RGVEDA:

Rgveda Samhita is a collection of 1028 hymns (Suktas), containing a little over ten thousand verses (Riks). They are in praise of ritual duties like Agni, Soma, Marut, Indra, Varuna and other gods. It also contains hymns on marriage, gambling, funeral, etc. The authorship of the various hymns is attributed to the great seers like Ghritsamada ( गृत्समदा ), Visvamitra ( विश्वामित्र ), Vamadeva ( वामदेव ), Atri ( अत्रि ), Bharadvaja ( भरद्वाज ) and Vashetha ( वशिष्ठ ). The Rgveda is divided into ten sections called Mandalas. There is also another division into Astaka.

The Date of the Vedas is said to be about 3000 B.C. Among the recensions of the Rgveda, only Sakala recension is available. The two Brahmanas which belong to this Veda are the Aitareya-40 chapters and the Kaushitaki or Sankhayana is in 30 chapters. The Aitareya Aranyaka attached to this Veda is in 8 chapters, and the Aranyaka Kausitaki is in 15 chapters. The Upanishads that belong to this Veda are the Aitareya Upanishad and the Kausitaki Upanishad.

#### YAJURVEDA:

The Yajurveda-samhita consists of hymns taken from the Rgveda. This Veda contains also prose passages and explanations of the Rgvedic hymns from ritualistic point of view. Hence this Veda is partly in prose and partly in verse. This Veda has two main divisions, Krishna Yajurveda and Sukla Yajurveda. This Veda deals with many important rituals such as the new moon and full-moon sacrifices, the Soma sacrifice, the Vajapeya, Rajasuya, Asvamedha and other sacrifices. Construction of the fire altar is also described.

The Brahmanas that belong to this are the Taittiriya Brahmana and Satapatha Brahmana. The Taittiriya Aranyaka belongs to this Veda. Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads form the Upanishadic part of this Veda.

#### THE SAMAVEDA:

The Samaveda is closely connected with the Rgveda. The major portion of Samaveda consists of Rgvedic hymns. These Rgs are distributed into two books called Archikas (1) *Purvarcika* and (2) *Uttararcika*. The verses in the Samaveda differ from the Rgveda only in marking the accent. These are intended to be sung by the Udgatr priests at the sacrifices. The song-books attached to this Veda give the rules for prolongation, repetition and interpolation of syllables necessary while singing the hymns. Samaveda is said to have had 1000 recensions (Sakhas), but only three of them the Ramayaniya sakha, Kauthuma and the Jaiminiya are available. Pancavimsha Brahmana, Chandogya Brahmana, Chandogya Upanishad all belong to this Veda.

#### THE ATHARVAVEDA:

The Atharvaveda is mainly a collection of spells for fighting against diseases, wicked animals, demons, enemies, etc. The Veda also con-

tains spells of an auspicious character such as charms to secure harmony in family and village life, reconciliation with enemies, long life, health, prosperity etc. So two purposes are found in this Veda viz. to appease and bless and also to do away with evils. For the kings this Veda is of great importance since it contains mantras for bringing success in war and diplomacy.

The recensions of this Veda are the Saunaka and the Pippalada. Gopathabrahmana forms part of this Veda. There are no Aranyakas. Many Upanishads are said to belong to this Veda, viz. Prasna, Mundaka and Mandukya Upanishads.

#### VEDIC CULTURE:

By a study of the Vedas it is found that the early settlers in ancient India were pastoral people (who cultivated the land). Their houses were made of wood. They took ghee, milk, grains and vegetables. They made their vessels with metals or clay. The use of liquor was restricted. Cattle breeding was their main occupation in the early stages. Later on agriculture and hunting came to be practised by them. Boats were used for crossing streams and rivers. Barter system existed. Gambling and dice were their amusements. Among the domestic animals, the cow occupied an important place.

The caste system took a definite shape during this period. There were carpenters, weavers, rope-makers, jewellers, actors and many other classes of people who followed different professions. Kingship was hereditary. In war the Chariots were used. The horses and the elephants also appear to have been used.

The standard of morality was very high. Monogamy and the benefits of practising it were fully recognised. Burial or cremation was done for disposing off the dead bodies. Cremation was common.

The Rg., Yajur and Sama Vedas give information about the religious and secular aspects of the life of the early people. The Atharvaveda contains lot of information on the secular side alone. Spells and charms were used against diseases and enemies and to get prosperity in the home and trade. Much information is given about medicine, astrology and astronomy.

The people in the Vedic Age worshipped the forces of Nature. Sun, Dawn, Wind, Rain, Fire and others were personified and worshipped.

#### MUSIC AND DANCE:

The Art of Dance found a place in a Vedic sacrifices. Probably this was performed by women-folk and a specialised form or variety of dance. In this dance maids carrying vessels filled with water on their heads, standing in a circle moved round thrice. The sages address Indra as dancer (RV. I. 130-7, II. 22.4, VIII. 24-12). Some sages speak of Indra as a skilful dancer. Maruts, Dawn (Ushas) are all described as dancers or their activities are compared to the dancers.

Group dancing is referred to as having been performed during the sacrifices (RV. VI. 75.4., AV. X. 7.43). Singing and rhythmic steps were used there (X. 94).

The Atharvaveda refers to Gandharvas and Apsaras dancing.

Nritya, Gita and Vaditra are referred to in the Kausitaki Brahmana as the three kinds of Silpa or art. The following musical instruments are referred to in the Vedas Aghati (cymbal), Adambara (drum), Kaskari (lute), Kandavina (lute), Tunava (flute), Dundubhi (drum), Nadi (reed flute), Bhumidundubhi (earth drum), Vana (harp), Vina, etc.

There is a full description of the Veena in the Taittiriya Samhita. Vinagathin or Vinavadaka, i.e. a lute player, is known from Yajurveda and Brahmana texts. Group playing of instrumental music was known in the later Vedic age which is attested by the word *Vinaganagina* occurring in the Satapatha Brahmana.

There is a legend in the Satapatha Brahmana about *Vak*, speech. The Gandharvas appear to have purchased *Vak* from the Gods for Soma and recited the Vedas to her. The Gods became jealous and wanted to get back *Vak*. So they created the lute and sat playing the instrument and singing. Immediately *Vak* returned to the Gods.

Thus the importance of singing or music, i.e., singing, dancing and instrumental music is found mentioned in the Vedas. Gandharvas and Apsaras dancing is mentioned in the Atharvaveda.



The Chendogya Upanishad refers that the place where song and music were plentiful and continuous, leads one to the desired ends of human achievement.

Another musical instrument which occupied a dominant place was the Dundubhi or the war drum. Before the warriors went into battle, these drums were honoured ceremoniously. They were washed and smeared with scents. Then the priests struck the drums and waved them over the warrior to the accompaniment of hymns.

#### AMUSEMENTS:

Horse racing was one of the favourite amusements of the Vedic age. This game was called as *Aji*. The swift running horse was given the title *Vajin* or *Atya*. There was a prize for the winner. He also became famous in the society. Singers invoked Indra for help in the race course. In the Brahmana literature also we find reference to Indra as *Aji krt* (race maker) and *Aji pati* (lord of the race).

Another favourite amusement of the Vedic age was the game of dice. It appears to have been a vice indulged in for easy gains. A gambler is called in the Vedas as *Kitava*. There are references to professional gamblers in the Rgvedic society. The game was played in the *sabha*, the local assembly hall.

#### VEDIC RECITATION AND VARIETIES OF RECITATION:

Vedic recitation became systematic with three base tones like *udatta*, *anudatta* and *svarita*. The *svarita* was the harmonising (*sama-hara*) or balancing tone that was a combination of the partial tones of *anudatta* and *udatta*. A vowel when uttered with a high tone is *udatta*; with a low tone *anudatta*. The time taken for the pronunciation of a vowel is classified as short (*hrasva*) long (*dirgha*) and prolated (*pluta*). These utterances as short etc. are three fold as mentioned above *Udatta*, etc.

Depending on the order of words (*Pada*) in the Vedic hymns there are eight chief techniques of reciting the Vedas. The purpose of devising these eight ways is to preserve the purity of the text. The eight techniques or modes of recital aim at preserving the order of the words without allowing the loss of a single syllable.

The eight modes are Karma, Jata, Ghana, Mala, Ratha, Sikha, Danda, and Rekha. These are dependent on the order of words in the Samhita text. The order of the words is changed.

#### EXAMPLE:

##### Samhita

ओषधयः	सं	वदन्ते
सोमेन	सह	राज्ञा
यस्मै	कृणोति	ब्राह्मणम्
तं	राजन्	पारयामि
ओषधयः	a	यस्मै g
सं	b	कृणोति h
वदन्ते	c	ब्राह्मणम् i
सोमेन	d	तं j
सह	e	राजन् k
राज्ञा	f	पारयामि l

Krama — Two words are recited together

ab	ba	ab
ab / ba / ab		bc / cb / bc
cd / dc / cd		de / ed / de
ef / fe / ef		f / iti / f
gh / hg / gh		hi / ih / hi
ij / ji / ij		jk / kj / jk
kl / lk / kl		l / iti / l

#### THE TEACHINGS OF THE VEDAS:

Different views are put forth about the teachings of the Vedas as representing allegorical thought or sacrificial compositions, or mere addresses or prayers to Gods. But in general these Vedic hymns represent the religious consciousness of the people. It is also felt that

Monotheism is the subject of some of these hymns. There are some hymns which look upon several Gods as one and refer to the Universal Being.

इष्टं मितं वक्ष्यमानमाहु रयो दिव्यः न सुपर्णो गच्छमानः ।

एकं गतिप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति अग्निं यमं मार्तरश्चानमाहुः ।

But one can safely and surely depend on the Brahmanas and Upanishads for interpreting the spirit of the Vedas. These later texts are but a continuation of the thoughts found in the hymns. There is a natural transformation of thoughts contained in these hymns. One finds the change from the worship of outward spirits to the intelligent enquiry of the Supreme Being, the creation of the world and beings, their mutual relationship and so on.

A complete study of Vedic Hymns is indispensable for understanding the growth of Indian thought and culture.

Though one may feel that the hymns appear either to be crude or immature or myths or allegories still they form the bedrock for the later philosophical and religious doctrines and activities. Hence the study of the Vedas reveal the different facets of our ancient culture as described above.

### MUSIC IN THE VEDIC PERIOD

The ancient Indians generally associated music with religion. They attributed the origin of music to Gods and Goddesses. The Gandharvas and Kinnaras, the semi-divine beings are associated with the origin of music.

In India since Vedic period a variety of musical instruments are mentioned. The musical instruments were classified by Bharata in his *Natyashastra* under four heads : *tata* ( तत ) (stringed instruments), *sushira* ( सुषिर ) (wind instruments), *avanaddha* ( अवनद्ध ) (percussion instruments) and *ghana* ( गण ) (instruments like cymbal).

In the Vedas we find references to several musical instruments and the occasions in which these instruments were played. Music and dance formed part of the amusements of the people. The Samaveda

stands as the outstanding monument to the great skill of the ancients in the science of vocal music. The chanted Veda is probably the oldest available combination of records intended to be sung. In fact the music of India evolved to a great extent from the Vedic chants. There were professional musicians in the Vedic age and a great variety of musical instruments are frequently referred to in the Vedas. There are references to vina players, conch blowers, drummers etc. Some of the musical instruments mentioned are :

Āghāṭi ( आघाटि ) (cymbal)

Āḍambara ( अडम्बर ) (drum)

Karkari ( कर्करि ) (lute)

Kāṇḍaviṇā ( काण्डवीणा ) (lute of reeds)

Gargara ( गर्गर )

Godhā ( गोघा )

Talava ( तलव )

Tunava ( तूणव ) (flute)

Dundubhi ( दुन्दुभि ) (drum)

Nāḍi ( नाडी ) (reed flute)

Piṅgā ( पिङ्गा )

Bakura ( बकुर )

Bhūmi Dundubhi ( भूमि दुन्दुभि )

Lambana ( लम्बन ) (drum)

Vanaspati ( वनस्पति ) (drum)

Vāṇa ( वाण ) (harp)

Vāṇī ( वाणी ) (lyre)

Vādana ( वादन ) (plectrum)

Viṇā ( वीणा )

In the Rgveda where hymns are addressed to different Gods, invoking them to be present at the sacrifices there is mention of singing and dancing and references to the above musical instruments, that were used as accompaniments.

Among the musical instruments referred to above Dundubhi is one which was a kind of drum used both in war and peace. It is frequently mentioned in Sanskrit literature written subsequently.

Bhumi Dundubhi was a special kind of earth drum made by digging a hole in the ground and covering it with hide. Long sticks were used for beating this drum. Adambara was also a kind of drum. The drummer who beats this is called as Adambaraghata. The Dundubhi is praised thus -

यध्वि त्वं गृहे गृहे उलूखलक

गुण्यते \* शुभसर्गं वद जयतामिव दुन्दुभिः ॥

"It indeed, O Mortar thou art present in every house, give forth in due sacrifice, a joyous sound like the drum of a victorious host". Aghati was a cymbal used in dancing. This is referred to in the Rgveda and the Atharva veda. Karkari was a stringed instrument. The Kanda veena was made out of the joints of reeds. The Tunava was a wind instrument made out of wood. Probably this resembled the flute.

नाले दध्यान्नाक्रमयजाय आतिष्ठमाना

य नान्यमीन् प्राविणत् प्रेषा वाक्चनस्पतिषु वदति ।

या दन्दभयो या तूणवे या वीणायां यदीक्षितदण्डं

ययज्जगत् वाचभवावस्थे

(Taittiriya Samhita)

The Nadi ( नादी ) was a reed flute

यमस्य भग्नने नाडीर्यं गीभिः परिष्कृतः

"This is the dwelling place of Yama, where Gods live. This pipe sounded for his satisfaction, he is worshipped by hymns".

A few other varieties of veena mentioned in the Vedic literature are alghu vina ( आलावु वीणा ), pichoda ( पिछोड ) and kanda veena ( कण्डवीणा ). Kanda veena is a kind of lute made probably with the joints of the reeds. Each part of the vina has also been described - Sira or the head; ndara or cavity; ambana, the sounding board; pithi or the strings; and the vadamakona or the plectrum

The Taittiriya Samhita gives a full description of the veena. It says that this instrument is brightly painted and precious stones are used for decorating it. The belly of the instrument is covered with red leather. There were ten holes in it to which strings of darbha or munga grass are tied. The stem was made of wood.

The Dundubhi or the war drum, has been the most important instrument used in the martial music of India. There are hymns addressed to the war drums. Before the commencement of the battle, the drums were worshipped. They were washed and were smeared with scents. Then the priests struck the drum three times. Thus there were ceremonies connected even with the musical instruments.

There is also reference to dance in the Rgveda. Ushas or dawn is compared to a lady dancer wearing embroidered garments.

अधि पेशांसि पवते नृतुरिव ।

The Brahmana literature also makes several references to music and its resemblance to Sama chant. The Satapatha Brahmana makes the following remark - 'When it rains hard, a (musical) sound as that of a Sama chant is heard'.

यदा बलवद् वर्षति ताम इवोन्धि क्रियते

(XI. ii. 7.32)

Dundhubhi and Vina are often referred to in the Brahmanas. Vina was considered as a graceful and sacred instrument. This instrument is identified with Sri or Grace. 'When a man gets a fortune lutes are played to honour him; Brahmins sing to its accompaniment for a year'.

यदा वै पुरुषः श्रियं गच्छति वीणास्मै वादयते ।

ब्राह्मणौ वीणागाथिनौ संवत्सरां गयतः

(SB. XIII. i. 5, 3)

Thus the following statement stresses the concept of identity of Vina and Grace.

श्रियं वा एतद्रूपं यद्वीणा

Some times Samans were chanted to the accompaniment of the beating of the drums :

पुन्यधीनभि साम गायन्ति

The term vinaganagina refers to the chorus of lutes (SB. 13-4-3-3). Composing songs and singing them are mentioned (SB. 13-4-2-8).

In another place the term Uttaramandra is given in connection with the playing of the Vina and singing.

ब्राह्मणो वीणागाथी दक्षिणत उत्तरमन्द्रा-

मुद्राश्नास्तिस्तः स्वयं संभृता गायतीत्यजत ।

### SAMA VEDA AND MUSIC

Of all arts music has the greatest power over people's mind. It takes one's mind easily from this mundane world and keeps one united with the Supreme Being. It presents before us the God in all his glory, splendour and magnificence. This was well understood by our ancients. They at first started praising the deities in poetic hymns called Riks. But finding in due course that God is easily pleased by music they set tunes or put into notation the Riks i.e., they produced the Sama Veda.

The Chandogya Upanishad speaks of Saman thus:

प्रायधोनां पुष्पो रसः । पुरुषस्य वाग् रसः । वाचो ऋग् रसः । ऋचः साम

रसः । साम उद्गीथो रसः ।

सामस्वस्य साम्न उपासने साधु । यत्कलु साधु तत् साम, यदसाधु तत्साम इति ।

"Man is the essence of herbs; speech is the essence of Man; Poetry is the essence of speech; Music is the essence of poetry; Udgitha or Pragraha is the essence of music. Therefore the worship of all saman or music is good. What is good or perfect is Saman. What is bad or ugly is asaman."

Ravana is said to have worshipped Siva with Sama gana. In the Bhagavadgita the Lord says that he is really the form of the Samaveda: Vedanam Samaveda nami.

देवानां सामवेदोऽस्मि ।

By singing the Samaveda with proper intonation and without break and practising this veda with concentration one reaches the Supreme Being. This is said in the Yajnavalkya Smriti.

यथाविधानेन पठन् सामगायमविच्युतम् ।

सावधानस्तदभ्यासात् परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥

In the kriti Samaja Varagamana, Sri Tyagaraja speaks of Lord Krishna thus. He is described here as well versed in music which is the nectar ( अमृत ) that came out of the Sama veda and as the light shining on the hill of Nada, made up of the seven svaras born from the pranava ( प्रणव ), the main part of the vedas.

सामनिगमज - सुधामय - गानविचक्षण ॥

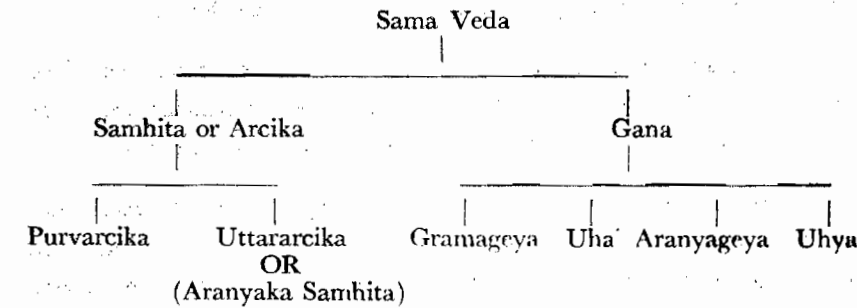
x x x

वेदशिरो - मातृज - सप्तस्वर - नादाचलदीप ।

compare also

मोदकर - निगमोत्तम - सामवेदसार - वारम् वारम् ॥

The Samaveda contains the following divisions :



The hymns of the Rgveda are used as Sahitya, for the Samavedic chants. Hence this following statement:

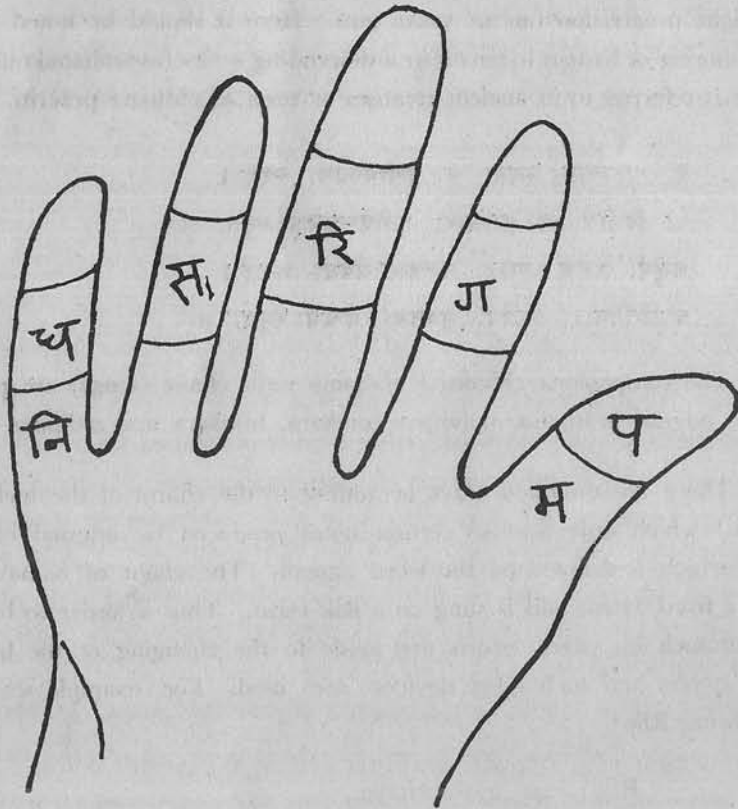
गीतिषु सामाख्या

The hymns in the purvarcika are arranged according to the deities that are praised. In the uttararcika the hymns are arranged according to the sacrifices where these hymns are sung.

number of syllables are used while singing the samaveda. Some of the syllables used are a, e, o, au, ha, ho, uha, taya, has, etc.

In certain ganas, words and verses which have meaning are used. But these are only stobhas e.g. Sethu Saman. These stobha syllables, though they do not have any meaning still they have spiritual significance. They form part and parcel of the Ganas.

### GATRA VEENA



The seven notes that are used in the Sama veda are called prathama (प्रथम), Dvitiya (द्वितीय), Tertiya (तृतीय), Chaturtha (चतुर्थ), Mandra (मन्द्र), Atisvarya (अतिस्वर्य), and Krushta (क्रुष्ट).

दारवी गानवीणा च द्वे वीणे गानजातिषु ।

सामवी गानवीणा तु तस्याः शृणुत वक्षणम् ।

The gana part of sama veda is divided into Gramageya (ग्रामगेय), Aranyageya (आरण्यगेय), Uha (उह) and Uhya (उह्य).

While propitiating the deities singing the hymns is more moving and effective. Hence in the sacrifices there were special priests or Udgatrs who sang the hymns of the Rgveda. Two to seven hymns are strung together in the same melody and they were sung by these Udgatr priests. Each such group is called as a stotra (स्तोत्र). The following difference is found between the purvarcika and uttararcika. In the former the Rik alone with the melody is given. This makes it possible for the beginner of the saman to pick up and practise the notations for that Rik. In the uttararcika the further Riks forming a whole stotra to be sung with that particular (melody) notation is given.

The Second main division called Gana (गान) gives the different notations. These different Ganas are associated with specific purpose of the singing and the benefits that come through the different deities. Some of these melodies are of special significance and are to be used in solitude. Hence these Ganas are divided into two varieties. Those that are to be sung in public villages are called as gramageya. Aranya geys are those which refer to the gana that is sung only in the seclusion of forests. In the later part of the purvarcika called Aranyaka samhita the hymns forming part of the Aranyagana are found.

Uha is adaptation of what is given in one place for another place or occasion. Hence in using uha the gramageya notations are to be utilized. In Uhya those notations of the Aranya gana are used.

In the same Rik, several ganas from simpler forms to more elaborate ones occur. One or the other method of singing is adopted according to the rites or sacrifices. The main ganas are seven. (1) Gayatra; (2) Agneya; (3) Aindra; (4) Pavamana; (5) Arka; (6) Dvandva and (7) Vrata purvas.

Whenever a text is sung or put to a melody it becomes more and more elaborate. At times the elaboration may lead to distortion. When the Riks are sung, in the Sama veda, they also undergo modifications and augmentations. Particular sounds are added which have no literary significance. These letters are called Stobhas (स्तोभ). A large

गात्रवीणा तु सा प्रोक्ता यस्यां गायन्ति सामगाः ।

स्वरव्यञ्जनं संयुक्ता अङ्गुल्यङ्गुष्ठं रञ्जिता ॥

अङ्गुष्ठस्योत्तमे कुण्डो ह्यङ्गुष्ठे तु प्रथमः स्वरः ।

प्रदेशिन्यां तु गान्धारः ऋषभस्त्वन्तरम् ॥

अनामिकायां षड्जस्तु कनिष्ठायां तु धैवतम् ।

तस्यधस्तान्च योऽयस्तु निषादं तत्र विन्यसेत् ॥

According to Naradiya siksha these correspond to the following notes on the flute (ma - ga - Ri - Sa - dha - ni - Pa). This is not straight progression but in vakra gati. Here it should be noted that the singing of Saman hymns is in a descending series (avarohanakrama). This is referred to in ancient treatises or texts as nidhana prakriti.

यः सामगानां प्रथमः स वेणोर्मध्यमः स्वरः ।

यो द्वितीयः स गान्धारः तृतीयस्त्वृषभः स्मृतः ॥

चतुर्थः षड्ज इत्याहुः पञ्चमो धैवतो भवेत् ।

षष्ठो निषादो विज्ञेयः सप्तमः पञ्चमः स्मृतः ॥

The components (Bhaktis) of Sama vedic chant (songs) are prastava, udgita, pratihara, upadrava, omkara, himkara and nidhana.

There are thousand ways of adding to the charm of the melody (Giti) which only conveys certain notes produced by internal effort and which is denoted by the word Saman. The chant of Samaveda has a fixed extent and is sung on a Rik verse. Thus in order to bring about such an effect, efforts are made to the changing of the letter and stobha and such other devices are used. For example see the following Rik.

Rik Agna ayahi vitaye  
grinano havyadataye  
ni hota satsi barhisi

Saman Oragnae ayahi  
voace toyace, toyace  
grinano ha  
Vyada to yayee etc.

Some of the devices used are as follows:

1. Vikara : Changes in the letters of the Rig veda words.
2. Vislesana : Rig vedic words are broken up into parts.
3. Abhyasa : Repetition.
4. Vikarshana: Vowels of the Rig vedic word being lengthened.
5. Virama : Pause, i.e. singing part of a word often with a pause.

The Rik verses are sung to a certain melody. The Riks are the skeleton, the notes of the melody are the flesh that covers the bones, and the stobhas are the decorations or flourishes. Thus says the Chandogya upanishad.

The greatness of sama veda is described in detail in the Chandogya Upanishad. The word Saman is interpreted in several ways: Sa is speech, ama is breath, sa is the eye, ama is the soul. The Rik is the bright lusture of the eye, the Saman is the dark, black colour of the eye. This Saman rests upon the Rik, the one who sings the Saman on the lute sings of Him (Supreme). They become the winners of wealth. Thus the Sama veda is praised in the Chandogya upanishad.

According to the musicologists the most important thing is the scale or note of the saman singing. According to them the Saman scale is equated with the Hindustani Kafi - that and the Carnatic Karahara-priya mela. The Phulla sutra of Sama veda says that the ganas are mostly in five notes and that a few are in six and fewer still in seven. The fact that the ganas are in five notes may be compared to the idea that in folk music and in the music of the ancient people the pentatonic or Audava krama, was very much used.

We find this way of singing the Saman hymns, is in practice even now. Finally one can say that the Saman svaras were probably not exactly the same as the svaras that were used in our classical music. According to scholars and musicologists the sruti values appeared to be slightly different when one compared Saman music with current or present day classical music. But the basis for all the music, the svaras and srutis, are found in the sama veda. Besides this the high devotional and spiritual values which one attaches to art of music are all derived from the spiritual efficacy associated with the singing of Saman hymns.



Some important techniques used in the Saman singing are given below:

#### A. Structural changes for musical rendering:

1. Vikara: Changes in the letters of the Rgvedic (Rv) word in the Samavedic (Sv) setting, e.g., Agne (Rv) Oragne.
2. Vislesana: Rgvedic word broken into parts in Samavedic setting.  
Eg: Vitaye of Rv text - Vit - taye.  
to ya in the Samavedic song.
3. Abhyasa: Repetition. Eg: Singing 'to ya yi' twice.
4. Vikarsana: The vowel of Rgvedic word being lengthened in Sv, Yi becoming yī in Sv.
5. Virama (Pause): Singing part of a word often with a pause.  
Eg. of the phrase grnāno havyadataye. One is to sing grnāno ha and then after a short pause vya dataye.
6. Stobha: Introduction of exclamatory words in the midst of song; for example the introduction of exclamatory words like Au hova. 'Ā u hāu', 'Hau Hau' in the midst of a particular song.

Agna ayahi vitaye grnāno havyadataye

Ni hota satsi barhisi

Saman : Oragance : ayahi voce to yace : toyayee : grnāno  
ha : vyada to yace : naee ho ta : sa : tat - sa va o ho  
va : hi shi : Om.

#### B. Components (Bhaktis) of the Samavedic song:

1. Prastava: Introductory eulogy; the introduction or prelude of a samān. Sung by Prastota. Group of 3 singers namely Prastota, Udgatha and Pratiharta sing a Samavedic song. All the three sing together 'hum' in the keynote. Then the Pras-

tota sings the introductory or Prastava portion of the song together with aum.

2. Udgitha: Chanting of the Sv. especially of the exact Sv. without the additions. Av. xi. 7.5 XV. 3.8. The second part of the Samaveda. Next the Udgatha (Rv. ii. 43.2) sings the Udgitha portion of the Sama. This is the main portion of the song. Udgitha means singing in higher notes.
3. Pratihara : Name of particular syllables in the Saman hymns with which the Pratihara begins to join in singing, generally at the beginning of the last pada of a stanza. The pratihara catches up the last syllable of Udgitha and starts singing the Pratihara portions.
4. Upadrava : The fourth of the five parts of a Saman stanza (Approach to the end).
5. Nidhana : The concluding passage of a Saman which is sung in chorus. All the three together sing the concluding portions of the song. All the three chant together 'aum' in conclusion.
6. Onkara } The sound or cry ॐ and ह्र used in ritual.
7. Hinkara }

The Chandogya Upanishad of this Veda which deals in detail with the esoteric significance of Saman-singing tells us about these sections called Bhaktis as five.

Stotra is a chant of a certain number of verses set to a certain melody out of those mentioned in the ganas of Samaveda.

Stobhas are musical interjections and flourishes introduced in the Saman chants such as 'hau', 'ī', 'u', 'hum' (Chan. Up. I. 13.).

#### (b) THE UPANISHADS

The Vedas and the Brahmanas prescribe the performance of sacrifices leading to the earthly and heavenly welfare. But these are only temporal and when the function of these acts come to an end, one is again reborn according to his merits. Thus the cycle of birth and death continues. In order to get released from the clutches of this cycle, it

Instead of the common sacrificial fire in which offerings are made, a number of extra ordinary fires are pointed out. The Chandogya-panisad speaks of the heaven as the Sacrificial fire with Sun as the fuel, the rays as the smoke and the moon as its cinder; the stars are the sparks (Ch. V. 4.1). In this fire Truth is offered as an offering. From this arises the King Soma. Thus a special significance is brought about for the sacrifice.

[illegible]



In this context Saṅkha and Dundubhi are also mentioned.

Chandogya Upanishad praises the Veena thus.

तद्य इमे वीणायां गायन्त्यतं ते गायन्ति तस्मात्ते धनसन्तयः

"Those who sing on the lute they sing of Him. They are the winners".

The Dakshinamurti Upanishad refers to Lord Siva with Veena in his hand.

The back bone of the human body is compared to the Veena Danda in Yogasikha Upanishad.

गृदस्य पृष्ठभागेस्मिन्वीणादण्डः स देहभृत्

The Upanishads forming the last part of the Vedic Literature show us thus the path for eternal salvation. Enquiry about the Universe, the God, the man, the mobile and the immobile things in this world, and their mutual relationship, Meditation or Upasana of the Soul leading to permanent bliss - all these form the subject matter of the Upanishads. The above given account will give one a bird's eye view of the contents of the Upanishads, their relevance to philosophy.

### (c) VEDĀNGAS OR ANCILLARY TEXTS

A study of these texts is necessary for understanding and interpreting the Vedas and also how to make use of the vedic hymns in sacrifices. They are six in number viz., Siksa (Phonetics), Vyakarana (Grammar), Chandas (Prosody), Nirukta (Etymological interpretation), Jyotisa (Astronomy) and Kalpa (Ritualistic texts). Siksa and Chandas are aids for the reading and recitation of the Vedas, Vyakarana and Nirukta for their understanding and Kalpa for practising the rites enjoined in the Vedic texts.

1. The Pratisakhya and Siksa texts have close connection with the Vedas. These texts give instructions for the correct pronunciation and accentuation of the Samhitas of the Vedas. Some of the important texts belonging to this class are Taittiriya pratisakhya, Rgveda pratisakhya, Puspasutra and Atharvapratisakhya. These texts give us an idea about the accurate knowledge which the Vedic scholars possessed

about the place and production of sound. There are also a few other texts which belong to this category. They are called as Siksa-s. Few Siksas of importance are the Paninīksa, Naradasiksa, Vyasasiksa and Lomasa.

Naradasiksa has an important place in the field of Music since it deals with Samavedic recitation and music. It refers to Tana-raga-svara-grana-murchana. It also mentions the seven gramaragas. In this work the murchana of Gandharagrama is referred to. In this work there are description of the seven tones, both Vaidika and Laukika, three granas, Sadja, Madhyama and Gandhara, 21 murchanas and 49 tanas which formed the svaramandala.

He has also described the daravi and gatra veenas. The gatra veena is using the fingers to indicate the svaras while singing the samans or touching respectively the middle part of the head, forehead, middle part of the eye brows, ears, throat, thigh and chest, when the samans are sung. Manduki Siksa also attests to the fact of using the fingers. The seven notes as they occur in Saman music are called Prathama, Dvitiya, Tritiya, Caturtha, Mandra, Atisvarya and Krusta. According to this Siksa, these correspond to the following notes on the flute: Ma - Ga - Ri - Sa - Dha - Ni - Pa, which is not a straight progression, but a vakragati.

2. Vyakarana is helpful for the proper understanding of the use of words in their correct sense. The earliest text on grammar now available is the Astadhyayi of Panini. Some earlier grammarians are referred to by him. Panini too refers to actors as Sailusa.

In the Astadhyayi music is mentioned as an art (Silpa). Not only instrumental music as Cymbals, Tabor etc., but also dance and vocal music are mentioned under the category of Silpa. A vocal singer is called as pathaka and a songstress as gathika. Vina playing is also referred to.

3. Chandas deals with metres in which the Vedic hymns are composed. The Nidhanasutra in ten sections explains the nature and names of Vedic metres.

4. Nirukta interprets the Vedic words. Nirukta of Yaska (800 B.C.) is the earliest text in this branch. The words occurring in the Vedas are grouped under three heads viz. Naighantukakanda containing synonyms, Naigamakanda, a list of ambiguous and different words and Daivatakanda, list of names of deities occupying the sky, earth and heaven.

5. Jyotisa is a supplement which helps in the fixing up of the proper time for the performance of sacrifices. A work called Vedanga-jyotisa contains 43 verses connected with Yajurveda and another in 36 verses attached to the Rgveda.

6. Kalpa must have had its growth from the Brahmana portion of the Vedas. These works are in the form of Sutras.

The subject matter of the Kalpa sutras can be divided into four heads viz. Srauta, Grhya, Dharma and Sulba. Srauta sutras deal with the worship of the three sacrificial fires, the performance of Darsapurnamasa and other rites. The Grhyasutras deal with the popular customs and religious ceremonies connected with a person since he is created and upto his death, the duties of the members of the three castes, duties of teacher and so on. The Dharmasutras deal with law religion, custom and usage, the duties of castes and the order of life. The Sulbasutras contain the necessary instructions for constructing sacrificial altars. In fact these represent the beginnings of geometry.

Some of the important texts are Apastamba's grhya and Sulba sutras, Asvalayana grhya and Sulba sutras.

The importance attached to these supplements is well brought out by the following reference in Panini Siksa.

Chandas — feet of Veda

Kalpa — hand

Jyotisa — eye

Nirukta — the ears

Siksa — the nose

Vyakarana — the face

#### (d) UPAVEDAS

Apart from the four Vedas, there are four Upavedas or secondary Vedas. They are AYURVEDA (medicine), GANDHARVAVEDA (music), DHANURVEDA (archery) and ARTHASASTRA (politics).

**AYURVEDA:** The science of medicine called as Ayurveda means 'that with which life is obtained'. The origin of this branch can be traced to the Atharvaveda, since that Veda contain details on hygiene and anatomy. Any ailment is removed only by the grace of God in addition to medicine.

This system deals with life at levels; physiological, biological and psychological. Both preventive and curative sides of medicine and surgery are used in the treatment of diseases. Three humours, Kapha, Vata and Pitta were recognised. Any disease is caused by the derangement of these humours.

The Ayurveda has eight sections:

1. Salya: surgery and midwifery.
2. Salakya: diseases of head, eyes ears, etc.
3. Kayachikitsa: science and art of bodily ailments.
4. Bhuta-vidya: psycho-therapy.
5. Kaumarabhrtya: treatment of children.
6. Agadatantra: toxicology or antidotes.
7. Rasayanatantra: on elixirs.
8. Vajikaranatantra: on rejuvenation.

The earliest text available in Ayurveda is Charakasamhita of Charaka (about 150 B.C.). Susruta was another great writer on Indian medicine, who speaks about surgical instruments and surgical operation. Some other important authors and works are Kashyapasmhita of unknown date Astangahrudaya and Astanga-sangraha of Vagbhata (6th

Cent. A.D.), Nagarjuna's, Yogasara and Yogasastra (4th Cent. A.D.), Ramanriganka of Bhoja (11th Cent. A.D.) and Cikitsasastra of Cakra-pati (1060 A.D.).

On veterinary side also there were treatises.

Narayana's Matangalila and Palakapya's Gajacikitsa also known as Palakapya speak about the treatment of diseases of elephants. Asvacikitsa of Nakula, Asvayurveda of Vagbhata (1000 A.D.), Salihotra of Bhoja (1005-1054 A.D.) describe the general features of horses, the good and bad ones and the treatment of the diseases of horses.

**GANDHARVAVEDA:** This is an upaveda connected with Samaveda. It includes dancing and music.

The Natyasastra is the earliest authoritative text on music. Matanga, probably earlier than 4th Cent. B.C., wrote the Brhaddesi. Sangitamakaranda of Narada is assigned to 850 A.D. Sarngadeva is the author of the Sangitaratnakara and it is an important treatise on music. The Sangitasamayasa of Parsvadeva was composed in the 13th Cent. Other important treatises in this field are Nartananirnaya of Panduranga Vitthala, Sangitasudha of Govinda Diksita, Sangitapari-pata of Ahobila and Sangitadamodara of Subhankara.

**DHANURVEDA:** The science of archery, Dhanurveda is treated as Upaveda. The Kodandamandana and Sarngadhara's Viracintamani (1163 A.D.) are some of the treatises on fighting.

**ARTHA SASTRA:** The science of politics is named as Artha Sutra. We get glimpses of the principles of the science of politics in the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Indra and Brihaspati are considered to be authorities on this subject.

The earliest available treatise is the Arthasastra of Kautilya (C. 328 B.C.). The work is in fifteen sections and written in prose.

Some other important works in this field are the Nitisara of Kaman-daka (7th Cent. A.D.), Nitivakya-mita of Samaveda and Nitiratnakara of Chandrayana.

## LESSON—2

### LITERARY HERITAGE—(contd.)

#### (a) DHARMAŚĀSTRAS

The Vedas, the treasure house of Hindu culture, speak mainly about Dharma and Moksa, the two important objects of human life. In fact 'Dharma' is said to sustain the world. But this term connotes several concepts such as *conduct, duty, law, religion, justice and morality*. The Dharmasastra literature is called as *Smṛti*.

śrutiḥ tu vedo vijñeyo  
dharmasāstram tu vai smṛtiḥ

The word *smṛti* is derived thus: *smṛyate veda-dharmo anena iti*, i.e. by which the vedic dharma is remembered.

The Dharma-sastra-s, which deal with the general rules of conduct and law, form a branch of the kalpa-sastra-s which form part of the Vedangas. The ideologies propounded in the Dharma-sutra texts and the different samskara-s (purificatory rites) described in the Grhya section both together help in the purification and refinement of a person.

The Dharmasastra literature can be classified into four varieties: the sutra-s, the sastra-s, the commentaries and the nibandha-s.

The Dharmasastras mainly stress the necessity for following the time honoured practices as prescribed in the Vedas. The main contents of this branch of texts are: the duties of the four varna-s and asramas, various moral samskaras of men, like upanayana and marriage according to different castes, the avocation of the four varnas in life; the duties and responsibilities of the king; rules for taxation, ownership, guardianship, witnesses, moneylending, payment of debts and deposits, punishment for the various crimes, partition, inheritance and different kinds of issues got by one marrying women of different castes; injustice of births; deaths and other causes, different kinds of śradddhas, rules about food, duties of women and their property; assessment and conditions, the sins and their removal, penances and their conditions. The Dharma sastra-s or smṛti-s deal with these topics in an analytical and systematised form under the following heads: *acara* (rites), *vyavahara* (dealings) and *prayascitta* (expiations).

The *Gautamadharmasutra* is said to be the earliest dharma-sutra available. A few noteworthy features of the contents of this work can be given here. This sutra recognises eight forms of marriage. They are as follows; Brahma, Prajapatya, Arsa, Daiva, Gandharva, Asura, Rakasa and Paisaca. Then the other topics such as five great sacrifices ( पञ्चमहायज्ञ ), giving away gifts, rules regarding showing respect to parents, elders, relatives and teachers, the forty samskaras or purificatory ceremonies and the eight spiritual qualities as forbearance, non violence, compassion etc., the responsibilities of the king, taxation, sources of ownership, guardianship of minor's wealth; Rajadharma; punishments for assault, abuse etc., rules about witness; sraddha of five kinds; the causes and occasions for Prayascitta; five things that remove the sin ( japa, tapa, homa, fasting and gifts); sinners of various grades, candravanavratas, krecchra and atikrecchra vratas; partition, stridhana etc. All these are dealt with in the 28 chapters contained in this work.

Some of the other important dharma sutras are the Bodhayana-dharma-sutra, Apastamba, Hiranyakesi, Vasistha and Harita.

Next in importance among the works of this class is the Manu-smṛiti. This is a voluminous work and was considered as an authoritative one. This is in 12 adhyayas and contains 2694 slokas. This work is written in a simple style. This treatise also deals with following the topics: the origin, growth and decline of dharma; definition of dharma, mode of life of the house-holder; rajadharma-s, king's duty to look after proper dispensation of justice; duties of different castes; nature of karma; eulogy of Vedas etc. Thus Manu's text is considered as authoritative and this text fixed the conduct of the Indians for all times. There are more than a dozen commentaries on this work.

Nibandhas or digests of smṛtis started being written from the 11th century onwards in Bengal, Mithila and Benares. Some of the important treatises of this class are the Vyavaharatilaka and the Nirnayamṛta of Bhavadeva, the Dayabhaga of Jimutavahana, Madanaratna pradipa of Madanasmṛti.

Though these texts do not directly deal with fine arts still because of their connections with the religious practices an account of them has been given above.

## (b) ITIHASAS (EPICS)

From the Vedic literature which is essentially religious in character, we shall now pass on to the Itihasas and Puranas which form the predecessors to classical Sanskrit literature. The Vedic deities are succeeded by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Some new Gods like Ganesha, Kartikeya, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, Durga and other Gods and Goddesses came to be worshipped. There is also a tendency to introduce wonderful and super-natural elements in the descriptions of the several acts connected with these deities. The Itihasas and Puranas which contained the accounts of these 'new' Gods and Goddesses these descriptions are written mostly in verse. References to the Itihasas and Purana are found in the Brahmanas and also in later Vedic and Sutra texts. Their period may be said to be between 800 B.C. to 200 B.C.

Itihasa means ancient occurrences handed down traditionally from one generation to another. It is defined as containing the stories of ancient occurrences and instructions about the four fold pursuits of existence namely Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

धर्मार्थ - काम - मोक्षाणां उपदेश समन्वितम् ।

पूर्ववृत्त - कथायुक्तं इतिहासं प्रचक्षते ॥

Hence Itihasa (Epics) which give accounts of ancient incidents cannot be treated as mere myths or fictitious.

The literature of epics abound in religious atmosphere as already mentioned. The Vedic Gods like Agni, Indra, Vayu, etc. are less in importance. But Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and others come into prominence. These epics paint the sufferings of the people borne patiently in a spirit of optimism. We shall here make a brief study of the two epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

### THE RAMAYANA:

The Ramayana of Valmiki is one of the most outstanding epics. It contains 24,000 verses distributed among the seven Kandas: Bala kanda, Ayodhya kanda, Aranya kanda, Kishkinda kanda, Sundara

kanda, Yuddha kanda and Uttara kanda. It deals with the life of Rama and Sita. The author Valmiki calls this work as a poem Kavya, Akhyana ( आख्याना ), Gita ( गीत ) and Samhita ( संहिता ).

The Ramayana was taught to Lava and Kusa, sons of Sita, who were then exiled by Rama and living in Valmiki's hermitage. This poem was sung by the two boys in the presence of Rama, when he performed the Asvamedha ( अश्वमेध ) sacrifice.

This epic Ramayana is highly praised by several scholars. It is a popular literary work and more than that it is held in great respect by Hindus. The pious minded people make a daily recitation of it. It is said that Brahma predicted about the Ramayana thus.

यावत् स्थास्यन्ति त्रिरयः सरितश्च महीतले ।

तावत् रामायणकथा लोकेषु प्रचरिष्यति ॥

This epic is called as the Adikavya and Valmiki as the Adikavi. The great popularity of this work is because of the characters of the epic, the style, the beautiful descriptions and memorable sayings which it contains. One is much impressed by the attitude and course of action taken by Rama at the critical junctures. The sufferings of Sita, the parental love of Dsaratha for Rama, Rama's strong determination to follow the path of Dharma even under bad circumstances, the descriptions of Hanuman's heroic deeds and the wise manner in which he discharges the role of the messenger these are all beautifully pictured by the great poet Valmiki in his Ramayana. How much this has influenced the literary works composed later on is very clear from the several dramas, poems and other literary works written by the various classical writers in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. In the music field also this epic had shown much influence. We find Purandaradasa, Saint Tyagaraja, and ever so many other saint-cum-musicians singing gloriously about Rama and Sita and thus proving the importance of this epic.

Thus the epic has greatly influenced the life of the people, the poets of the classical period and also the musicians. The word Rama Rajya has come to mean good rule. Popular among the translations of Ramayana are the Kamha Ramayana in Tamil by the great poet Kamhan and the Ramacharita maulana of the Hindi poet Tulasidas.

The date of this epic is about 500 B.C.

The Ramayana is full of several cultural details. The religious and social conditions, the educational policy, the economic conditions, the pursuit of fine arts are all described elaborately in this work. Here a few references to music and musical instruments can be taken up.

The great epic refers to Lava and Kusa as स्थानमूर्च्छन-कोविदो that is well versed in stana and murchana. Probably the stana here refers to the three registers: Mandra, Madya and Tara. Murchana is the elaboration of the basic form of the raga.

Lava and Kusa are said to be well versed in the art and science of music, namely Gandharva. Valmiki speaks of them as follows: तो तु गान्धर्वं तत्त्वज्ञौ भ्रातरो स्वरसम्पन्नौ । Valmiki has tried to blend music and poetry through his immortal epic, the Ramayana. Hence we find the following statement being made while Lava and Kusa sang the epic.

प्रशंससुः प्रशस्तव्यौ गायन्तौ तौ कुशीलवौ ।

अहो गीतस्य माधुर्यं श्लोकानां च विशेषतः ॥

Valmiki himself says that this work was intended to be sung. He feels that this epic was sweet when read or sung पाठ्ये गेये च मधुरम् In this context i.e., the description of Lava and Kusa singing the Ramayana, several technical terms of music like pramanas, jati, sthana, murchana, Marga are all referred to. The seven sentiments or rasas viz., Sringara, Karuna, etc. are also mentioned and described.

जातिभिः सप्तभिर्भुक्तं तन्त्रीय-सन्निवाम् ।

x x x रसैर्भुक्तं काव्यमेतद्व्यायताम् ॥

The pathya referred to above also appears to be a technical term in music. Abhinava Gupta who wrote a commentary on the Natya sastra of Bharata muni says that any composition ( साहित्य ) should contain six alankaras and sweet tones. Then it is known as pathya ( पथ्य ). These six alankaras according to Abhinava Gupta, are the svata (tone), the sthana (register), varna, kaku ( काकु ) alankara and anga. So a kavya or sahitya of a song is called pathya, when it had these six alankaras. The function of a varna is to manifest a song. Different alankaras were derived from the four varnas (1) Arohi, (2) Avatohi, (3) Sthayi, (4) Sanchari.

The music had two parts called गीत and वादित्व the vocal and instrumental. The marga style of singing is referred to in this statement:

अगायतां मार्गविधान-सम्पदा ।

In the description of the harem of Ravana, Valmiki gives a long list of musical instruments: Vina Madduka, Pataha, Vipanchi, Mridanga, Adambara, Panava, Dindima, etc.

Marga referred to here is also one of the pranas of the tala. Bharata refers to only three margas, Chitra ( चित्र ), Vartika ( वार्तिक ) and Dakshina ( दक्षिण ). The Sangeeta Ratnakara of Sarnga Deva refers to four margas. They are Dhruva ( ध्रुव ), Chitra, Vartika, and Dakshina.

#### MAHABHARATA:

The Mahabharata is the other important and well-known Itihasa. It is more closely connected with vedas and the dharma sastras. It is the longest poem known to literary history. In its present form it contains more than a lakh of verses. It was composed by Sage Vyasa. It is divided into 18 parvas. The 18 parvas are Adi, Sabha, Vana, Virata, Udyoga, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Salya, Saupthika, Sthri, Santi, Anusasana, Asvamedika, Asramavasika, Mausala, Mahaprstanika and Svargarohana. These parvas are not of equal length. Each parva is divided into several adhyayas or chapters. It has a supplement called Harivansa. The epic deals with the story of the Pandavas and Kauravas. The subject matter of the Mahabharata can be brought under the three heads.

(1) The Pandava stories, (2) Ancient stories and legends, (3) Didactic and ethical stories. The entire Pandava and Kaurava story forming the main theme of epic is only very small. To this story is added a vast number of legends of Gods, kings and sages, who are not directly connected with the theme of the epic. Some times a whole work is added to illustrate a particular idea. For example the Nalopakhyaṇa. The epic also contains exposition of philosophy, law, religion, the duties of the various castes, as also those to be performed in the different stages of life (Asramas). In its complete form this epic is

a voluminous treatise teaching four Purusharthas ( पुरुषार्थ ) namely Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

धर्मं चार्थं च कामे च मोक्षे च भरतर्षभ ।

यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न तत् क्वचित् ॥

“Oh, the great son of the Bharata family! with regard to the four human values in life namely virtuous conduct, material welfare, family life and salvation what ever is spoken of in this work is found in other treatises also; whatever is not dealt with there is not found in other treatises.”

The date of the Mahabharata can be said to be between 500 B.C. to 300 A.D.

This epic is an encyclopaedia of life and knowledge. It could be more properly referred to as a literature of a whole period, giving us not only what our ancient history was but also several details of political, social and religious life of the times. The greatness of the epic lies in reflecting the life both in its good and bad aspects. It is a mirror of life presenting impressively the strong ambitions of the human mind. Duryodana's greed and jealousy, Draupati's grim determination, Yudhishtira's steadfast devotion along with his fondness for gambling etc. There seems to be some ethical value of suffering which alone elevates us and makes us constantly practise the path of virtue.

This epic contains very good descriptions of the incidents occurring in the court, penance groves, svayamvara ( स्वयंवर ), battles and other incidents.

Some of the important sections of the Mahabharata are the Viduraniṭhi, the Bhagavatgeeta and the Nalopakhyaṇa. Viduraniṭhi, covers a wide field of thoughts about individual life as well as social life. It is a treasure house of civil and moral wisdom.

The Bhagavatgeeta found in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata is accepted as one of the important texts in the field of religion and philosophy. It is a valuable aid for understanding the four human values of life. This work is also called as Brahmasutra and a yoga sastra. It is also called as Upanishad. This treatise though intended to

Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gita, fighting with enemies, still in constant detail descriptions of the nature of food, mobile and immobile with and without and the connection between them. The duties of men are explained in the Bhagavad-gita as an easy method for getting the peace of food. Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga are given as the three ways leading to perfection. Much importance is given to the performance of one's duties under any kind of circumstances. Thus the Bhagavad-gita is one of the most popular religious treatises of India.

The principles of dharma which the epic preaches have earned for it a prominent place among the dharma sastras. The epic abounds in moral and ethical passages.

It also being an important treatise on dharma and other purusharthas it refers at times to music and dance. Arjuna goes to the Indraprastha when the Pandavas were in exile. There Indra finding that Arjuna is proficient in the weapons he asks Gandharva Chitrangada to teach Arjuna the science of music as found in the heavenly regions.

नृत्यं गीतं च x x x

वायस्य देवावहितं नृलोके यत्र विद्यते ।

There are references to dance, music both vocal and instrumental. In fact in another passage here, there is a mention of the music as Gandharva and that Arjuna picked up subtleties of both dance and music. Arjuna teaches music to Uttara, the daughter of the Virata king during the stay of the Pandavas in the Virata country.

There are also references to the musical instruments Vina, Dundubhi, Venu (flute), Panava, Bheri, Sankha (conch), Tambura singing Samagana is also referred to. The two authorities on music, the serpent Kings, Kamhala and Asvatara are also mentioned in this epic.

Since this epic Mahabharata contains descriptions of war also we find several musical instruments used during warfare being mentioned. They are the Sankha, bheri, anakadundubhi, krakaca, govisanika (cow's horn) and mahanakabheri. Each warrior had his own conch. Pandava janya of Krishna, Paundra etc.

Villibharata, the Tamil epic also refers to several musical instruments used in warfare. They were *murasu* (murasu), *kanatikai* (kanatikai), *tudi* (tudi), *parai* (parai) and others.

Harivamsa a supplement to the Mahabharata is in three parts (1) Harivamsa parva is the introductory section, which gives the origin of the different dynasties. (2) Vishnu parva gives details about the life and adventures of Krishna. (3) Bhavishya parva describes the Kali age.

### (c) PURĀṆAS

Puranas form a very important branch of literature since they serve to interpret Hinduism in all its aspects. There are in all eighteen major puranas. They are: (1) Brahma-purana or Adipurana; (2) Padma; (3) Vishnu; (4) Vayu; (5) Bhagavata; (6) Naradiya; (7) Markandeya; (8) Agni; (9) Bhavishya; (10) Brahma-vaivarta; (11) Linga; (12) Varaha; (13) Skanda; (14) Vamana; (15) Matsya; (16) Kurma; (17) Garuda; (18) Brahmanda.

Puranas are classified as those about Siva, Vishnu etc.

अष्टादशपुराणेषु दशभिः गीयते शिवः ।

नवभिः भगवान् ब्रह्मा द्वाभ्याम् देवी तथा हरिः ॥

Another classification is as follows:

Venu	Sattvika: Vishnu, Narada, Bhagavata, Garuda, Padma, Varaha.
Brahma	Rajasa: Brahmanda, Brahma Vaivarta, Markandeya, Bhavishyat, Brahma, Vamana.
Har	Tamasa: Matsya, Kurma, Linga, Siva, Skanda, Agni.

The Purana deal with the following five subjects:

मयैव प्रलयमश्नुते तथैव मत्तमसि स्थितः ।

अथावतस्मिन् जीवन्त्यस्य मया कल्पमायम् ॥

*Sarga* means primary creation by Brahma; *pratisarga* is secondary creation by *prajapatis* or sons of Brahma. *Vamsa* deals with the different dynasties. *Manvantaras* are those which refer to the reigns of *Manu* and other *Manus*. *Vamsanucarita* gives an account of the famous royal dynasties like the solar and the lunar.

All these puranas were narrated by Suta to Saunaka and other sages in the Naimisa forest. The authorship of all the puranas is attributed to Vyasa. The period of the puranas may be between 100 B.C. to 500 A.D.

These puranas are generally in the form of conversations between two or more persons on various topics connected with Hindu way of life, culture, religious ceremonies, festivals, political history, philosophy, etc. These contain illustrative stories proving the efficacy of performing vows and observing fasts. Since religious and moral precepts are taught through the stories thus, people were able to understand them easily and faith also was inculcated by listening to these stories. Hence the *Puranas* gained great popularity among common people.

#### CONTENTS OF A FEW PURANAS:

1. **VISNUPURANA:** This purana is divided into six sections or *skandhas*. They deal with (i) the creation, (ii) the description of the universe, (iii) the ages of the fourteen *Manus* and the division of *Vedas*, (iv) the dynasties of the Kings, (v) an account of *Kṛṣṇa* and (vi) the different kinds of *pralayas* or dissolutions and the nature of *Yuga*.

2. **VAYUPURANA:** Interesting and important work on creation or re-creation; origin of *Agni*; *Varuna*; genealogies of ancient kings descended from *Vaivasvata Manu*; detailed geography of earth divided into seven *dvipas*; *Pururava's* love for *Urvashi*; birth of the *Aswins*.

3. **BRAHMAVAIVARTA:** This purana is divided into four sections as follows: (i) *Brahmakhanda*; (ii) *Praktikhanda*; (iii) *Ganeshkhanda* and (iv) *Sri Kṛṣṇa jammakhanda*. There are 206 chapters in this purana.

The first *khanda* deals with the nature of the Supreme Being. The second deals with the nature of the *prakṛti* and its manifestation as

*Durga*, *Lakshmi*, *Savitri*, *Sarasvati*, etc. The third *khanda* deals with the origin of *Ganesa* and he is said to be Lord *Kṛṣṇa's* manifestation. *Kṛṣṇajammakhanda*, the fourth section, describes the episodes of *Radhika* and *Kṛṣṇa* in detail. There are also descriptions of holy places in this purana.

4. **SKANDAPURANA:** This is the largest one in extent and contains nearly '81,000 verses'. This is divided into 7 *skandhas*: (i) *Maheśvara*, (ii) *Vaiṣṇava*, (iii) *Brahma*, (iv) *Kāśī*, (v) *Avanti*, (vi) *Tāpī* and (vii) *Prabhāsa*. The famous *Sutasamhita* and the *Kāśīkhanda* which describe the holiness of *Kāśī* form parts of the purana. The birth of *Skanda* and his exploits are narrated here. This purana expounds *Saivaite* philosophy also.

5. **MATSYA:** A voluminous work, dealing with devotional vows and forms of worship; holy places and rivers; gifts of various types, omens, construction and consecration of images of Gods and Goddesses, house building; social customs, funeral ceremonies, etc.

6. **BHAGAVATAPURANA** was a most popular one. This is said to have been composed in South India during the 13th Cent. A.D. This purana was written with the intention of spreading and establishing *Bhakti*. This purana though mainly gives an account of the life of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord's previous incarnations are also described.

7. **GARUDAPURANA:** This purana is divided into two parts. In addition to dealing with usual puranic topics, contains chapters on astronomy, astrology, superstition, omens and portents, medical science, treatment of snake-bite, examining precious stones. There is also the description of life after death and the ceremonies to be performed after the death of a person.

#### MUSIC IN THE VAYUPURANA:

The *Gandharva vidya* (Music) is included as one of the *Vidyas* such as *Vedas*, *Vedangas* etc. The names of the *svaras* - *Sādja*, *Rāgha*, *Mādhyama*, *Vairajaka*, *Nisada* and *Pancama* are mentioned as the *Kalpa* names. But their connection is not very clear. In the context of the marriage of *Revati* with *Baladeva* reference to music is given. Seven *svaras*, three *grāhas*, twenty one *murchanas* and forty nine *tanas* are given.



Singing Samaveda at the sacrifices was a practice in vogue. The Vayupurana mentions this.

Samavedasca vrttadhyāh sarva geya purah sarāh  
and

samagesu tu gāyatsu

Kathmatara sama was sung to please Siva

Another interesting reference is to the singing of agamas properly with good svaras.

Uppragitesu tesu agamesuvatha susvaram'

Svara is frequently described in this Purana as very much fond of music and dance (gita-vadya-rata).

Several musical instruments are mentioned: Bheri, Dindina; Dundubhi, Gomukha, Jhallars etc. The art of dancing formed part of the worship of Siva (natyopahara lubdha). Virabhadra sang and danced with various movements of body: *kvacinnrtiyati citrangam kavacid vadya susvaram*.

Apart from these major Puranas some of the Upapuranas also give details about music. The Brhaddharmapurana praises Visnu as the Supreme Brahman and Music as the imperishable Brahman. Visnu says that svarata (pure notes) and technique are both required in singing, but the former has greater power than technique (vidhijnana). There are also references to twenty-two srutis, the seven svaras which form three gatis called ghora, manda and ucca. Raga-s and Ragini-s are more than five crores. Six primary ragas are Kanada, Vasanta, Tōpala, Mallara, Vibhasaka and Gandhara.

Another upapurana which refers to music and dance is the Vishnu-stotramottara. The sage Markandeya, the narrator says that the art of painting is dependent on the art of dancing and the art of dance is based on instrumental music and instrumental music is dependent on vocal music. Speaking about Gita Sastra the sage refers to the following topics—compositions of songs in Sanskrit, Prakrit and various local languages; different rhythms; gitalaksana; names of particular types of vocal music suited to different rasas, definition of Natya etc.

Some of the other Upapuranas which refer to music and dance are the Narasimhapurana, Brihan Naradiyapurana and Kalikapurana. Thus the puranas apart from dealing with religious subjects give detailed account also of fine arts like music, dance and painting.

### LESSON—3

#### LITERARY HERITAGE—(contd.)

##### (a) DARŚANAS — SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the science which aims at an explanation of all phenomena of the Universe by proving the causes that produce them. It is called आचार (spiritual perception) in Sanskrit. It is concerned with the understanding of the nature of the Supreme Being, its relation with the individual soul and the external world. The final goal of life is the attainment of the reality which is established by the philosophical discussions. In India, philosophy also prescribes a way of life to approach the truth. Thus religion (आचार) and philosophy (विचार) go together. Of the four human values in life salvation मोक्ष is the highest since one gets released from all bondages, whereas the other three धर्म, अर्थ and काम make one bound to the world and worldly life.

The beginning of philosophy can be seen in the Veda-s themselves since we find in the Rgveda and Atharvaveda speculations about the origin of the world and the eternal principle by which it is created and maintained. The Upanishad-s are fully devoted to these thoughts about the nature of the Supreme Being, its relationship with this world and the beings, the creation of the Universe, and such other details. There are six orthodox systems of philosophy recognised by scholars. They are Nyaya, Vaishesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. The common things that are dealt with in these systems are the creation of the beings in the world and how the causes of birth and death are to be put down by systematic observance of codes of conduct and finally the means of attaining salvation. For this, knowledge is to be acquired. But the nature of the knowledge differs in each system as also the condition of the soul after acquiring salvation.

##### NYAYA AND VAISESIKA:

These two systems form a pair. Both lay stress on methodical reasoning and explain the origin of the universe from the atom. These systems especially the former deals more with the problems of psychology while the latter is concerned with the categories i.e., पदार्थ. Salvation is attained through Tattvajnana. The Vaishesika system is

older than the Nyaya system. Kanada is the author of Vaisesika sutras and Sage Gautama composed the Nyaya sutras. These must have been composed about 500 B.C.

#### SANKHYA:

Sage Kapila is said to be the founder of this system, Kapila's work is not extant. The earliest available text is Sankhyakarika of Isvara-krishna assigned to the 2nd Century A.D.

The teaching of Kapila is dualistic. Two things Prakriti and Purusa ( प्रकृति and पुरुष ) are admitted. The evolution and diversity of the world are explained in this work. The name Sankhya is derived from the word सङ्ख्या because this system gives an account of the 25 Tattvas : Purusa, Prakrti, Mahat, Ahankara five jnanendriya-, five Karmendriyas, five Tanmatras, five Mahabhutas and Manas.

#### YOGA:

The Yoga system is an improvement on the Sankhya philosophy with the addition of the forms of mental practices which become the most effective means of acquiring real knowledge. This system also is based on the Veda where it was called as Pranavidya. This branch was founded and systematised by Patanjali in his Yoga sutra-s. Control of mind to get rid of the influence of matter is Yoga and the system gives in detail the methods of controlling the mind. Eight steps are given for this. They are यम, नियम, आसन, प्राणायाम, प्रत्याहार, ध्यान, समाधि and शमाधि. This system accepts a personal God.

Patanjali is the author of a work called Patanjala Yogasutra a work of 3rd Cent. B.C. This work consists of four padas समाधि, साधन, बिभूति and ईश्वर. Even some mysterious powers are said to be acquired by the power of Yoga.

#### MIMAMSA

This word means inquiry. It deals with the practical points of the Vedic religion by discussing about the Vedic sacrifices and the benefits that come to one by performing the sacrifices. Since this system deals with Karma-landa ( मुहिता ब्राह्मण and आरण्यक ) of the Veda-s. It is called as कर्ममीमांसा or पूर्वमीमांसा while the Vedanta system which is concerned with the आनन्द ( Upanishad portion ) of the Veda-s is called as उत्तरमीमांसा or ब्रह्ममीमांसा. This system deals

with the words and their meanings. It also does not accept God as the giver of benefits of actions but maintains that कर्म itself produces the effect. Jaimini is the author of the Mimamsa sutras, the probable date of which is 4th Cent. A.D.

#### VEDANTA:

This word means the end of the Vedas which is the name given also to the Upanishads. The Upanishadic passages speak about the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Being while there are also certain passages which speak about the difference. For these different interpretations are given.

This system is also known as Brahnamimamsa or Uttaramimamsa. Some of the well known schools of Vedanta are:

1. Advaita of Sankaracharya (7th Cent. A.D.).
2. Visistadvaita of Ramanuja (11th Cent. A.D.).
3. Dvaita of Madhva (13th Cent. A.D.).

#### (b) ĀGAMA

We have been studying about the Vedas, the ancient source for understanding the religious and cultural life of the Hindus. Next come the Agamas, another branch of texts, which are equally important source books for knowing the religious life of the devout Hindus.

The Vedas were dealing mainly with the worship of the natural phenomena such as Sun, Indra (the Rain God), the Wind Gods and the creation of the world. Gradually people started worshipping those deities with a corporeal form. Many such deities as Vishnu, Siva, Parvati, Lakshmi and Ganesa, and the retinue of these Gods became to be worshipped. They had definite forms and were enshrined in built-in structures which came to be called as Temples. These temples served the main purpose of developing devotion to the Supreme Being in whatever form the person conceived it. These temples served also as cultural centres for spreading devotional knowledge and fine arts like music and dance. The rules for the construction of the temples and for performing the ritualistic worship had to be codified. Such codi-

hed texts were called as Agamas. They contained rules and regulations for the conduct of temple rituals which brought welfare to mankind.

The Agamas can be divided into three groups viz. Saiva, Vaisnava and Sakta, the last one being more of Tantric nature. The followers of both the Saiva and Vaishnava agamas claim a divine origin for the agamas. They believe that these agamas were spoken to their devotees by the respective deities viz. Siva and Viṣṇu. They in turn passed on these to others. Some people considered the Agamas as superior to the Vedas.

In both the Saiva and Vaishnava Agamas, the contents are the same. There are four sections: Jnana, Yoga, Kriya and Carya. Most of these agamas had certain common features. The main element of Sadhana (श्रद्धा), reaching the Supreme being is common to all these agamas. Some other things found in the agamas are the puja to the deities (internal and external), other forms of worship as rites and meditation, upacara, forming the mandala, and yantra, consecration of the images and the temple, the temple festivals and such other things connected with the temple rituals.

In all these the selection of the Acarya is important according to the Agamas. He teaches his pupil the meditation of the mantras, the mudras and other rites. He gives initiation or Diksa to those who have to do the worship both at home and at the temple. He, the preceptor also supervises the temple consecration like Kumbhabhiseka and other ceremonies as installing the deities in the temple and the celebrations of various festivals. Thus the agamas have helped in preserving the ritualistic duties to be observed in the temples as well as the details regarding the installation of the deities etc. These treatises have also helped in showing us the path leading to God.

The Agama Sastra is also known as Tantra sastra. It is so called once it prescribes a particular mode of life and a practical course of self-discipline in keeping with the theoretical knowledge. The root *aga* means to spread and *gr* means to protect. Hence the word means the scripture which spreads knowledge and thus protects from the transitory life.

The Vaishnava agamas are divided into two schools as Pancaratra and Vaikhanasa. Both these schools accept a Supreme Being as also the power of Sri (Lakṣmi). The Pancaratra is the widely prevalent school. The school is also known as Sattvata (सात्वत), Ekayana (एकयन) and Bhagavata (भागवत).

Agamas and Vedas are closely related since in the worship of the deities as also the religious observances done by a person, the Vedic mantras are used. The pranava mantra 'Om' is mainly used in these treatises which mantra is also found in the Upanishads, part of Vedic literature. The significance of this mantra is found explained in the agamas also.

The growth of this branch of literature, the Agamas is also noteworthy. These Agamas stress the worship of a Supreme Being with attributes. This type of devotion also became popular after the Upanishadic period. This may be due to the reason that people found it difficult to perform the elaborate rituals and to follow the strict injunctions as laid down in the Vedas. Moreover the followers of Hinduism must have been increasing. This required simpler forms of worship according to the capacity of the aspirants. These must have given rise to the growth of the Agama literature.

#### MEANING OF PANCARATRA:

The simplest meaning of the word Pancaratra appears to be that the teachings of this school were expounded at first on five successive nights (Panca-five; ratra-night). There is a story in the Bharadwaja Samhita which establishes the truth of this statement. In the Krita-yuga, a demon Somaka, stole all the Vedas and so the entire creation was in confusion, since nobody knew how to perform their duties. Brahma and other Gods approached Vishnu and requested him to restore the Vedas to them. But this was possible only when the Gods helped him to acquire more strength by the repetition of the Astakshari mantra. So Gods and the people of the world started meditating upon this mantra to make the Lord gain enough strength to conquer the demon. This repetition of the mantra was done on five nights with firm resolve. These nights were called as Brahma, Siva, Rudra, Naga and Rsi. Then Vishnu became strong, killed the demon and restored

the Vedas. Thus this branch of the Agamas acquired the name Pancaratra which dealt with the installation, consecration and worship of Vishnu.

Sri Vaishnavas considered generally the Pancaratra texts as authoritative as the Vedas. These Agamas were all revealed by the Lord himself. This is said in the Mahabharata thus: पाञ्चरात्रस्य कृत्वा तु भगवान् स्वयम् । Pancaratra is complementary to the Vedas.

Sri Yamunacharya speaks of the Pancaratra as containing a summary of the teachings of the Vedas for the easy and immediate use of those devotees who cannot afford to study the Vedic literature. The Pancaratra Agamas are divided into four parts Agama, Mantra, Tantra and Tantrantara.

The Pancaratra literature is a very extensive one. There are supposed to be one hundred and eight (108) samhitas belonging to this school. The three important Pancaratra texts are Sattvata, Padma and Jayakhya.

#### AGAMAS AND CULTURE:

These Agamas are quite interesting from the cultural point of view. These texts contain details regarding the construction of temples, the carving of images, the rituals for their installation, worshipping Gods, performing abhisheka and details about the different seasonal festivals.

Some of the major festivals referred to are the Vasantotsava, Damanotsava, Deepotsava, Brahmotsava, Krishnajayanti, Ramanavami, Dhanurmasa, Aradhana etc. Daily rituals as well as these festivals were always accompanied by music and dance. In the temple structure itself the construction of a dancing hall ( नटमण्डप ) is referred to. This is a very prominent feature in the temples of Orissa. The Sriprasna samhita refers to this thus:

अथर्धमण्डपान् कुर्यात् नृत्तमण्डपनामकम् ।

नृत्तं अर्धमण्डपस्याग्ने कुर्यात्सर्वकाममण्डपम् ॥

This text gives a detailed account of the ceremonies to be performed while there is the hoisting of the flag ( पुरोहितोत्थानम् ). Here

reference is made to the use of Tripata Tala, Madhyama Svara, Gowda (la) Raga and Visnukranta nrta. There is also mention of the use of the several musical instruments like conch, and the recitation of the Vedas.

There are also references in this treatise to the offering of Kumbhadipas or Ghatadipas by the Dasis. In the 34th chapter of the Sri Prasna Samhita the details of music, dance, ragas and talas to be employed in the worship of different deities are given. For example for the worship of Indra, the sama tala is used, Nata raga is sung, the panchama note is used and the dance form is vilasa.

शचीपते जिताराते वज्रपाणे पुरंदरे ।

लक्ष्मीशोत्सवसेवार्थं आगच्छामरनायक ॥

समतलो नाटरागः स्वरः पञ्चमनायकः ।

नृत्तं विलासमित्युक्तं युरन्दरमनः प्रियम् ॥

The description of नाटराग is as follows:

खेटककृपाणपाणिः प्रतर्जयन्वैरिणोऽरुणदृक् ।

हरितलाभो हारी हयचारी धोर्धनीनाटः ॥

Indra is a gay person, beautiful to look at, a warrior, moving on a horse of golden hue. The description of the Raga is also similar. Hence the aptness of singing this melody. Vilasa is the same as Lalitha dance mentioned in the Nattyasastra. Similarly for Brahma the Ghanta raga is sung. The 'svara' is nisadha, the tala is Dharma and the dance is Kamalanarttana. Thus we find from the Sriprasna samhita that each deity is pleased by a particular raga, tala, svara and dance.

Navasandhi dance is a variety of dance performed during the Dhvajarohana (flag-hoisting) ceremony during the Brahmotsava, the annual temple festival. These dances are performed to please different deities. The raga (melody) to be sung, tala, vadya and dance associated with the particular Gods are given. After singing the invocatory verse for each sandhi, the pati for that particular occasion is

recited. In some temples Rsbha sandhi is also done. The **puspanjali** mittam was performed for this Sandhi.

The Agamas refer to the above. Navasandhi kauttuva. The Kauttuva is defined thus:

यत्किञ्चित्तालसंबद्धं देवताविषयात्मकम् ।

विविधपाठैर्युक्तं शब्दार्थरूपशोभितम् ।

x x x धिन्तान्तं कौतमुच्यते ॥

That is called as Kaura or Kauttuva in which a tala is used, has for its theme, the praise of God, which is beautified by different jatis and words which have significance. Prof. Sambamurthy says that this is a kind of devotional song. He further adds the following information. The Kauttuva begins with jatis and then the Sahitya follows. Tara Sadja svara is used. The music is in quick tempo. There are solfa syllables. Oduvars or Nattuvanars sing these during festivals. During festivals and flag hoisting ceremonies songs in praise of Ganapati, Subrahmanya, Natesa and Kali are sung. During Nava sandhi another feature of this Kauttuva according to Prof. Sambamurthi is that they are in Sarvalaplu.

#### VAIKHANASA AGAMA:

This is another important branch followed by the Vaishnavites of South India. Sage Vikhanas was the founder of this sect. An Agamic school was also named after him, which was developed by others. This school is prominently referred to in the inscriptions belonging to the period of Raja Raja I. It is believed that this school existed even earlier i.e. from the 3rd century A.D. In Thirupati temple the worship and other religious rites are done according to this school.

#### SAIVA AGAMAS AND MUSIC:

The Somasambhupaddhati while describing the Pavitrarepanar-vidhi says that along with recitation of mantras music is also to be played.

आवाहनी मन्त्रगन्तव्यः कृतगङ्गातिजागरः ।

The Diptagama gives the position of the instruments etc. to be arranged during a festival as follows.

In the east the Mridanga, the drum Maddala and the dancer in the South, musicians and flutists on the North and on both sides the devadasis. It adds that dance is performed with music in front of the deity.

Moreover the Saivagamas mention Siva's dance as one hundred and eight. The Karanagama, refers to the Kalika or Muni Tandava, Sandhya Tandava and Pradosa Nartana. The Gauri Tandava or Bhujanga Trasa is mentioned in the Kamikagama.

The Vatulagama mentions the Astadasa vadyam i.e. eighteen musical instruments: Bheri, Mridanga, Maddala, Tala, Kahala, Dundubhi, Turya, Tumburu, Vina, Venu, Nupura, Madduka, Dindima, Damaruka, Dhavala, Sabda, Panava and Pataha.

The Suprabhedagama says that a country attains welfare by the performance of dance in front of the deities.

एवं नृत्यं कृतं यत्र सुभिक्षं लोकशान्तिकम् ।

दुर्निमित्तानि नश्यन्ति क्षेत्रमारोधकं नृणाम् ॥

#### (c) TANTRAS

The Tantric literature is a very important branch of Indian spiritual science. A study of this branch is necessary for making our spiritual knowledge deep and complete.

The word Tantra is defined in several ways.

तनोति विदुलानर्थान् तत्त्व-मन्त्र-समन्वितान् ।

तत्त्व and मन्त्र have technical sense. तत्त्व means the science of cosmic principles and मन्त्र the science of mystic sound. Tantra means the application of those sciences with a view to the attainment of spiritual uplift. Briefly Tantra means spreading of spiritual knowledge which is based on तत्त्व and मन्त्र

Among the several topics given in the Tantras are included details of places of pilgrimage, origin of Gods, royal duties, mythological stories, meditation of syllables and so on. Tantra works are divided into four sections. These divisions are known as Padas and they are Vidya, Kriya, Yoga and Charya.

Some of the characteristic features of the Tantric worship are diksa (initiation), the recitation of the mantra for a prescribed number of times, homa, tarpana, abhiseka and feeding of Brahmans. Besides normal worship there was also provision for special types of worship through which one was able to get special benefits.

#### VEDAS AND TANTRAS:

The most important aspect of the Vedas was the performance of sacrifices. Gradually these rituals became more complicated and mystical significance got attached to these. The performance of these rituals produced good results as well as bad ones. Since Vedic people worshipped nature in its several aspects the purpose of these rituals was to get control over these forces of nature. The Tantras also deal with bringing natural forces under one's control. Instead of the elaborate ceremonies as given in the Veda-s, Tantras use symbols and make these rituals simple. Thus the Tantras were based upon the Vedic religion in the early stages and later on became a distinct branch of knowledge.

As already said the Vedic rituals were capable of producing the desired effect for the one who performs the sacrifice properly. Thus these sacrifices can be used both for noble ends or for bad purposes also. Thus there was the possibility of reaching the higher and lower ends. The lower ones were known as Black magic. The Atharva veda contains such elements. These features of black magic are founded in the Tantric rites also. Perhaps some of these magical rites leading to lower ends might have been prevalent in the primitive tribal societies which got absorbed and assimilated in the Vedic society and then in the Tantric system. Anyhow one cannot deny the connection between the Vedas and the Tantras.

#### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TANTRAS:

The Tantras as a distinct class of literature grew in close connection with the rise of Saivism and Pancaratra. Sankhya and Yoga provided a philosophical background for Tantras since they dealt with the Twenty four Tattvas like the five sense organs, manas etc. These practices were necessary for the performance of Tantric rites and they were based on Sadhana which formed an integral part of

Yoga. Mainly Saivism formed a strong background for the growth of the Tantric system. Here we can mention the fact that the Saivagamas are grouped under the class of the Tantras. There are Eighteen Saiva Agamas called as Saiva Tantras. In fact the term Tantra and Agama were both used for the same type of treatises without any difference. These Agamas are (1) Vijaya (2) Raurava (3) Nisvasa (4) Kirana etc. These Agamas are more of ritualistic nature. They deal with the rituals such as homa, abhiseka, diksa and also the construction of temples, the method of worshipping Siva, Yogic practices and salvation. The purpose of these treatises is the attainment of salvation through meditation and Yoga than performing elaborate rituals. Though no definite date can be given for the Tantras, it is found that such a type of treatise was prevalent in the first five or six centuries of the Christian era.

#### YAMALAS:

The next phase of development of the Tantras is the Yamalas. The important Yamalas are eight in number. They are (1) Rudra (2) Skanda (3) Brahma (4) Vishnu (5) Yama (6) Vayu (7) Kubera and (8) Indra.

The saiva Tantras and Agamas represent the Rudra or Sadasiva tradition, but the Yamalas represent the Bhairava tradition. Bhairavas seem to be preceptors who had obtained salvation and had become almost identical with Siva.

These Yamalas show a great development with regard to Sadhana. Several Tantric traditions are described. Several cults based on the worship of various other Gods and Goddesses are introduced. For the first time groups of Tantric deities are introduced. These new additions may be due to the absorption of local cults. Moreover the field of Tantric worship became widened and started to absorb the practices of the masses also.

There were three forms of Tantric traditions viz. Dakshina, Vama and Madhyama. These schools have their own type of Sadhana. Dakshina is characterised by sattva guna, which is pure; vama by rajas which is mixed, misra or madhyama by Tamas which is impure.

There are also texts called Tantra-vyakarana and Mantra-vyakarana of Gautama. They dealt with the mystic senses of the letters of the alphabets. Since the analysis (vyakarana) of words is done in these texts they were so called. Treatises such as Bijakosa, Varnakosa, Matrkakosa explain the bijas of mantras. They contain also a list of words used in the Tantras for the letters of the alphabet.

A Tantric treatise written about 1737 A.D., the Hamsavilasa of Hamsa mittu refers to the origin of svaras and the rasa of each. It is said that the Svaras were born from the Samaveda. The srutis are 14 and murchanas are also 14.

चतुर्दशैव श्रुतयस्तावन्मसाश्च मूर्छनाः ।

गीयन्ते मानवैर्भूमावन्यास्तु त्रिदशालये ॥

This Tantra mentions that Siva manifested the Raga Gandhara; Vishnu and Brahma visualised the form of Gandhara. Siva sang the raga and also a sahitya on Vishnu.

Six primary ragas: Bhairava, Pancama, Nata, Mallara, Gaudamalava and Desakha with several subsidiary ragas which arose from these are given. Thus this Tantra contains details regarding music.

In a Buddhist Tantric work Caryagitikosa the Vina is described thus. The Gourd is the Surya, string-candra. The strand represents the avadhuta. This is said to be the Herukavina, from which the unstruck note अनाहृतनाद shines very pleasantly. From this we can understand how the followers of the school recognised the two sounds, the one gross, heard when struck and the other the subtle one, which arises without any effort. Thus this sound which is spontaneous and not produced by any agent, makes the internal nadis vibrant. This leads to the merging of the individual self with the Supreme one. This is realised through the Nadayoga. The Vijnana Bhairava Tantra brings about this fact through the following verse thus:

गीतादिविषयास्वादसमसौख्यमात्मनः ।

योगिनस्तन्मयत्वेन मनोरूढिस्तदात्मता ॥

तन्व्यादि वाद्यशब्देषु दीर्घेषु क्रमसंस्थिते ।

अनन्यचेताः प्रयतन्ते परम्योमयपुण्येन ॥

## (d) MANTRAS

Mantras are used for meditating upon God. The hymns of the Vedas are called as mantras. But with the growth of the religions, especially the Sakta tantras, the inherent power of the words was recognised and there arose a mystical significance to the syllables themselves. The Saktas believed in the presence of large number of channels or nadis of occult force (nadis) and six centres of force (Cakras) in the body. These Cakras were compared to the lotuses which lay one above the other in this body. From ordinary mantras there arose such mantras as syllables such as hrim, hum, phat etc. These had supernatural powers and were capable of working miracles. When these mystic mantras were recited and meditated upon they were capable of producing miraculous effects. Saktas also believed in the efficacy of the powers of diagrams (Yantras) and ritualistic gestures made with the fingers (Mudras).

Mantra means that which protects the one who recites it. Another interpretation for mantra is that which is secretly spoken (or meditated upon). मन्त्र्यते गुप्तं परिभाषते इति. This type of mantra or meditation in its simplest form had great significance since it led one to the Supreme Being: This forms part of the Bhakti Yoga. Every deity had his own particular mantra. For example for the deity Pancaksari mantra ॐ नमश्शिवाय was used for meditation. For Vishnu there was the astaksari mantra ॐ नमो ब्रह्मणे वासुदेवाय. The mantra is not a mere means to an end since the recitation of this mantra purifies the mind and helps one realise the Supreme deity, who is etherial, indescribable and formless.

The mantras are also classified as Ekakshara, Malakshara, Vaidika mantra. Since it protects one who recites it, it is called

मन्त्रात् तस्यैव यस्मात्तस्मात्तस्मात् परोक्षेन

While defining the word Tantras, Kamikagami says that ततोति विप्लवार्थान्स्वमन्त्रमन्त्रिणां etc. which promulgates the profound matters concerning tattva and mantra. The two words 'tattva' and 'mantra' have a technical sense: tattva means the science of the cosmic principle and mantra means the science of mystic power. A mantra is to be understood as based upon the mystic power of syllables.

and the words which thus gives rise to an inner power to enable us to reach God.

Initiation or diksa is necessary for any mantra whether it is vedic, agamic or tantric. Diksha means 'that which gives a knowledge of things divine and destroys all that leads to a fall'. The preceptor not only initiates the students but also makes him understand the purport of the mantra. Thus the Pranava is said to constitute the syllables a, u and o which in turn represent the sattva, rajas and tamo guna-s. Thus 'Om' is said to be the subtle form of the secret formula 'bamsah' which is the ajapa mantra. Hamsa is said to be the breath of life.

We find in Buddhism as well as Jainism the use of mantras. Vijayanists in Buddhism had great faith in the chanting, repetition and meditation of the mantras. Guhyasamaja Tantra, a Buddhist world not only showed the path for salvation, but also prescribed a number of mantras (charms), mudras (mystic signs), mandalas (groups of deities) and so forth.

Moreover according to Buddhist Tantricism mantra or mystic syllables formed the back-bone of Tantric worship and Vajrayana. But some of the mantras used do not possess any meaning as for e.g.: इलमिन्वे तिलिमित्ते etc. Probably these mantras were influenced by a language now unknown. The Vairayanists maintain that the mantras were endowed with great power and they believed firmly in it. Their belief is so strong that the moment the Ekajatanmantra is uttered a person becomes free from danger and he is followed by good fortune. They also considered these mantras as sacred and they guarded them very carefully. The syllables and words of these mantras were preserved in a peculiar way in verses called as minemonic verses. For example a verse of this type runs as follows: आदौ चक्रधरः पिचुगुयात् प्रज्ञान्वितौ वर्धते etc.

आदौ चक्रधरः — ॐ पिचुगुयात् — पिचु पिचु प्रज्ञान्वितौ वर्धते — प्रज्ञावर्धना  
ॐ पिचुपिचु प्रज्ञा वर्धते ।

Another example is the Bijamantra of Sarasvati.

सप्तमस्य द्वितीयस्य मन्त्रस्य चतुर्थकम्  
प्रथमस्य तृतीयस्य श्रुतिं तत्र विबुधकम्

Second syllable of the 7th :	र	} हीम्
Fourth syllable of the 8th :	ह	
Fourth syllable of the 1st :	ई	
Bindu :	म्	

Such careful methods were adopted for preserving the mantras. Now we find from the songs of the great composers that some of them were either followers of Tantra system or had knowledge of the subject and the benefit of reciting the mantras. Purandaradasa the great composer recognises the efficacy of the 'Rama' mantra which is known also as Taraka mantra since it helps one to cross the sea of life. This is alluded to in the song of his.

प. राम मन्त्रवे जपितो हे मनुज  
अ. आमन्त्र ईमन्त्रतेचि नी केड बेड  
सोमशेखर तन्न सतिगे हेळिद मन्त्र  
च. कुलहीनक कूगि जयिसुव मन्त्र  
सले भीतियोळु उच्चरिप मन्त्र  
हळवु पापगळु हत केडिसुव मन्त्र  
मुलभदिन्दलि स्वर्ब शूरे गोम्बुव मन्त्र

The composer of this song asks people to meditate on the 'Rama' mantra without reciting any other mantra and getting spoilt. He says that the greatness of this mantra was imparted by Siva to Parvati. The Visnusahasranama also attests this statement. Further on the composer says thus in the carana the last part of the song.

'Any one be he low-born, loudly chants this mantra. In times of calamities this mantra is chanted. This has the capacity to drive the sins and it brings the treasure of heaven to the one who recites it'.

'Our reversed preceptor Anandatirtha meditates happily on this mantra. This is the sacred mantra which is chanted by Purandara Vitthala'.

Thus the efficacy of the Rama mantra is put forth in these lines of Purandaradasa's song.



In another song of Saint Tyagaraja the bijaksaras of the Rama mantra and Siva mantra are referred. In the song 'Evarani nirnayin-cirra' Tyagaraja says that he is not able to determine Rama as to his identity. He is not sure whether he is Siva, or Madhava or Brahma. Here the saint says that 'Ma' is the bija of Siva mantra, 'Ra' is for the Narayana mantra. 'Ma' is from 'Om Nama Sivaya' the Pancaksara and 'Ra' from 'Om Namo Narayana' the Astaksara. Fusing these two  $r$  and  $m$  the mantra is formed as  $राम$  the Taraka mantra. This clearly shows the knowledge of these composers in the mantra sastra. In another song of his 'Nadopasana' the Saint says that Sankara, Narayana and Brahma have imparted life to the mantras, yantras and Tantras.

Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar was a profound scholar in Tantra and Mantra. In his song भज रे रे चित्त in the carana he speaks of the Balambika as of the form of the mantras as expounded in the Tantra sastra. The carana runs thus

श्रीवश्वकूटजात - चतुर्वेदस्वरूपिणीम्

शृङ्गारकामराजोद्भव - सकलविश्वव्यापिनीम्

देवीं शक्तिबीजोद्भव - मातृकार्णशरीरिणीम्

In the Tantric Vidya the form of the Mother is said to be composed of the three kutas the Vakkuta, Kamakuta and Saktikuta, i.e., the first kuta is upto the neck, the second the region below the neck upto the hip and the third below the hip to the feet. This Vagbhava-kuta is the intellectual power viz., the Vedas. The Kamaraja kuta is the profusion of power, wealth, women and fame. Sakti kuta forms the Kriyasakti. All these aspects of Sakti are woven into this song very beautifully. The Kamalamba Navavarana refers to the different avaranas and speaks of the form of Goddess Kamalamba as of the form of mystic syllables अकचटतपादिवर्ण in the Todi song कमलम्बिके.

Thus we find that the knowledge of the science of Mantras also had their influence in the field of music. The musicians had well understood the power of the mantras which help me in reaching the God through sadhana. Moreover the Agamic way of worship, the Tantric practices and the meditation of the mantras all these fused together and helped the aspirant to attain salvation easily.

## LESSON—4

### LITERARY HERITAGE—(contd.)

#### INTRODUCTION:

From very early times, Tamil literature has been considered to have had three divisions: Iyal, Isai and Nātakam. Iyal stands for the subject matter of all literary compositions; Isai stands for music and musical composition; and Nātakam for dance and drama and dramatic composition. Agastya of the legendary first sangam is supposed to have written a treatise on the three divisions. No work of his is available now and we are unable to extricate him from the realm of legend. But in later gloss - writing we find many references to mut - Tamil and extracts from mut - Tamil books. Hence the concept of mut - Tamil is real.

Iyal Tamil is all speech and writing, including poetry. In this sense all the Tamil literature that has come into existence from the pre-Christian era down to the present day is Iyal Tamil. Tolkāppiyar, who wrote the first available grammar for the language, dealt only with Iyal Tamil. He limited his writing to the three parts - orthography, etymology and the subject matter of literature; later writers had extended the last branch to two more parts - prosody and poetics, and rhetoric; grammar had since come to be known as having these five parts, the Aindilakkaṇam. But no one of the stature of Tolkāppiyar had attempted all the five parts, although there were some very good books which dealt with individual parts. His book remains the best book on the three parts even to this day.

Cilappadikāram is hailed as the only ancient book which treats of mut - Tamil. Many chapters in the book having the title Kuravai, vari and mālai belong to the branch of music (isai). Besides, the author himself makes several references in his long poem to the many aspects of isai. However, the tradition of this isai, which was perhaps in vogue at the time of the Agastya of the first sangam and even at the time of the last sangam, seems to have faded out later. Paripādāl, a late work of the third sangam, mentions musical notations, instruments and composers for its verses. The term paripādāl is one which

was applied in those days to musical composition. Aḍiyārkkū nallār deals very elaborately with music, composition, singing, instruments and allied subjects, quoting extensively many passages from works of the past, and also regretfully mentioning the fact that most of them had been lost even in his day. Even the books which were available to him in the 12th century have unfortunately become extinct since then.

Still greater is the contribution of Cilappadikāram to the knowledge of the dance and drama of the period. The chapter dealing with the first public dance performance of Mādhavi gives detailed information of the great part played by dance in the cultural and social life of the higher classes of those days. The commentator writes in detail about all the features involved - the dancer, the dance instructor, the music teacher, the composer, the drummer, the flute player, the val - master, the stage, the talaikkōl (post of honour awarded to the dancer), and the manner of dancing. His exclusive elaboration on music is not available, because his commentary on the kāṇaḷvari chapter dealing with music has been lost.

The concept of mut - Tamil can thus be seen to be a very ancient one, in later days even when the divisions isai and nāṭakam had been lost or fallen into disuse, we find poets referring to mut - Tamil purely as a matter of tradition. Kaṇbar mentions mut - Tamil turai and Aḷvar speaks of Sanghā - Tamil mungu.

As already mentioned, only iyal Tamil had grown through the centuries, in variety and depth and in volume; isai Tamil and nāṭaka Tamil had not had such growth, perhaps because of the extinction of all traditions of the sangham in later years. Īnana Sambandha is alone brave figure who vigorously upheld the cause of music, both by his singing in the temples and by his devotional songs set to music. No doubt the songs of the other Saiva Acaryas and Vaisnava Alvars are also set to music, but Sambandha was the only hymnologist who militantly took up the cause of music. Music and drama were firmly suppressed by Kalabhras, temporary overlords in Madurai during the 3rd to the 6th centuries A.D., and it was Sambandha who restored isai Tamil back in the land to all its glory. Later it was taken up by

Aṇṇaḡirināṭhar in the 14 - 15th century and by music composers like Muttu Tāṇḍavar, from the 18th century.

Nāṭaka Tamil, forgotten for a long time, had some flicker of life in the days of Rājarāja I and Kulōttuṅga I, when their lives and deeds of valour were dramatised and enacted in the temples. But even that flicker died out, until dramas on the western model captured the minds of the people and they came to be enacted from the 19th century. Hundreds of dramas in which singing was an integrāl part were written and enacted in this period, covering religious and social themes. But the glory of nāṭaka Tamil as a division of mut - Tamil had died after the writing of Cilappadikāram and no one ever attempted to recapture that tradition, because all related literary material had been irredeemably lost, including the tradition.

#### IYAL TAMIL — TAMIL GRAMMAR:

The first division of Tamil as we have seen is iyal Tamil, Tamil as it is spoken and written; this is literary Tamil. All literature constitutes iyal Tamil, and grammar is that which speaks of the general rules governing this division. The earliest Tamil grammar is said to be Agattiyaṃ by Sage Agastiyā, who had written on all the three divisions of Tamil. It was the source of authority for the first sangam but in the deluges that occurred, it is said to have been lost along with a very vast body of literature which preceded it.

Tolkāppiyar is said to have composed the treatise on grammar in his name in the second Sangam, and it is a miracle that it is available to us in full even today, while many a book, composed at a much later date, has been lost. He divided his subject into three parts: eluttu (orthography), sol (etymology) and poruḷ (subject matter of poetry or literature). A vast body of writing on each part came into existence in the centuries after him. During the Kaḷabhrā interregnum at Madurai, the poruḷ part seems to have been suppressed; this gave rise to the production of Īraiyanār kaḷaviyal, on only one section of the original namely the Kaḷaviyal or the clandestine or pre-marital love. A beautiful commentary was written on it immediately and a very fine legend also grew about it. The Kaḷaviyal departs in many ways from the original, as is only to be expected. Its author (Īraiyanār had

evidently no access to the original Tolkāppiyam and he had to write it anew, from a general knowledge of the subject; we need not presume that he knowingly deviated from the other. The commentary is written in a wonderful prose which is still studied with admiration by all scholars; it is also the earliest piece of extant Tamil prose.

The 8th and 9th centuries appear to have been a period of hectic activity on grammar writing; a second Agastya, a second Tolkāppiyaar and many other disciples of Agastya lived during this period and composed scores of treatises on all the branches of Tamil and very much enlarged the scope of Tolkāppiyam but all their works are lost. To give one example, a manual on puram, on the 12 divisions of this subject was written under the title Panniru paṭalam, the Twelve Chapters, but it is also lost. In the next century (9th) Ayyan Aritān wrote his treatise, Purapporul venba malai, as an adaptation of Panniru paṭalam; his book is available and it has also an ancient gloss written on it. At about the same period another book on the ahapporul, by name the Tamil neri vilakkam, was written and we have only a fragment of it. The available fragments of the various books on prosody and poetics, written in the 8th and 9th centuries, were collected together under the title Panniru pattiyaal, in the next century. The century after that witnessed the writing of two books on prosody by Amitasāgara, Yāppanukalam and its Kārikai; both have elaborate commentaries written on them by the author's own disciples; the Kārikai is the popular treatise that is studied by students of Tamil prosody even today.

The nūrpā (āsiriyaṭṭā) was the metre employed in the grammatical works till then. For the first time, Amitasāgara breaks the convention and writes his shorter manual in the kattalai kalitturai metre, which was later evolved from the kalippā and in which the syllables in each line are measured as 16 and 17. Later writers begin to employ the venba and the viruttam metres.

Vaccanandi's work was the next work and it deals with the five branches and it is indeed an innovation on Tolkāppiyam. Besides its three divisions, the book adds two more - prosody and rhetoric, and the five have now come to be known as the paṭicalakṣanā, the five - fold grammar, and rhetoric is the next important work written, in the next century (12th). Guṇavīra paṇḍita, at the same period wrote his Nemina-

tam on orthography and etymology, and his Vaccanandi mālai on poetics. Nāṅkavirāṇa nambi wrote his Ahapporul vilakkam on aham, and it is the most widely read book today on that subject. Pāvanāṇḍi's Nannūl (the good book) is the most important work of this period; it deals with only the first two divisions. It is quite a valuable book and it has even superseded Tolkāppiyam. Minor works had been written during the later centuries till the 17th, when Vaidyanāthā Desikā wrote his most compendious work Ilakkaṇa vilakkam on the five branches. Tonnūl vilakkam and Muttuvīriyam were written in the next two centuries, but the fact remains that Nannūl holds the field and will continue to hold it for many years to come.

We should bear in mind that rules of grammar are not written down as classical text books in verse, in the modern European languages; only Tamil and Sanskrit have made the study of grammar also a science.

### TOLKĀPPIYAM

The book perhaps takes its name from the author, Tolkāppiyar. The title means the ancient classic; this is certainly a fact. It is a grammatical treatise; and so naturally it was preceded by centuries of a rich heritage of literary output and tradition. Tolkāppiyam lays down rules for the different types of poetic composition; these rules were of course extracted from books which existed earlier than the author.

Tolkāppiyam treats of only iyal Tamil. It is divided into three books: eluttu (orthography), sol (etymology) and poruḷ (subject matter). Some scholars are fond of tracing most of the contents of the first two books to Sanskrit sources; but the third book, poruḷ, is wholly the author's own - in conception, classification and elaboration. Each of the books contains nine chapters; perhaps the author did plan the books to be uniform in size and arrangement. The number of nūrpā in the books is 483, 464 and 652 respectively.

Tradition says that Tolkāppiyam was published in the court of Nilam taru tīruviṇ Pāṇḍiā, when Atankottasan presided; Panamparanār wrote the introduction or commendatory verse for the book. Both Atankottasan and Panamparanār, along with Tolkāppiyar, were

students of Agastya. Many centuries later, another writer composed a general preface to the book. Panamparanār's introduction says that Tolkāppiyar was well versed in the Aindiravyākaranā of Sanskrit; that book is not available; but Tolkāppiyam clearly indicated that its author was familiar with the Sanskrit rules on grammar. He has made rules in his book for absorbing Sanskrit words.

The first book deals with letters. The classes of the letters, the place of the letters, the place of origin of the sounds, and the coalescence of letters when words come together form the subject of the nine sections of this book. The definition of the units of sound for the various types of letters in this book is a valuable contribution to this subject. The concept of an u, shorter than the short u is equally important.

The second book deals with words. Its nine sections deal with the class of words (denoting higher or lower beings or things), gender and conventions, the cases and their import, the vocative case in particular, exceptions, then words of action, the particle and adjectives and adverbs; the last section hereof deals with the four kinds of words: the common or natural words, borrowed words, indigenous literary words and words of Sanskrit origin, and their significance. He mentions the Sen Tamil territory as twelve; these are not clearly known now. The three ruling dynasties are also referred to. Tolkāppiyar confied borrowed words to the twelve regional territories, later the author of Nannul added the traditional eighteen territories also (excluding the Sen Tamil territory).

The third book is Poruḷ adhikāram. Of its nine sections five deal with aham, one with puram, one each with similes, prosody and idioms. The Tamilian convention of classifying physiographical regions as the four: kuṇiṇji, mullai, marutam and neidal, and specifying the people who live there, their general pursuits, the seasons and the daily hours which are special to each region, the emotion of love that is most applicable to each region, the natural setting, animal and birds and the tutelary deities - starts from Tolkāppiyam. The author does not consider pālai - the desert region - as the fifth region; its classification as the fifth has been adopted much later. Though Tolkāppiyar held the regions as only four, he held the conventional conduct in love

poetry, tiṇai, to be five. Along with these five: aintṇai, he added two more, one-sided love (kaikkilai) and improper love (perum tiṇai). This classification has been adopted by later writers and no one has bettered it. The regions and the conventional conduct in the love theme is symbolized by five flowers: kuṇiṇji the hills, mullai the forest, marutam the plains, neidal the sea coast and pālai the desert. The themes associated with these are: Kuṇiṇji - union of the lovers; mullai - separation; marutam - patient waiting under separation; neidal - waiting on account of separation; and pālai - the woes of separation. Tolkāppiyam gives the themes and their elaboration only as isolated or stray topics, while later grammars like Nambi ahapporūl and the kovai poems string them together into a continuous narrative.

Just as aham also means a house and a domestic life, its external counterpart puram means mostly war in the ancient past. The activities connected with war are also grouped into seven categories or tiṇai. War generally commences with the aggressor marching into the enemy's country and capturing his herds of cattle. There were in war certain ethical codes, which laid down that the cows and some similiar objects are not to be hurt and so this preventive action. Flowers are always associated with the war activities. Eight flowers are mentioned. The raiding forces which capture the herds wear the vetci (ixora) flowers as a symbol of their raid, and so on. Corresponding to the laurel which is a symbol of victory, the eight activity, we have here the vahai (albizzia).

Among the other chapters of the book, that on prosody is important. It had evolved into a separate and full division of Tamil grammar and many books have been written on the subject. Some of them at least are extant today. The term used to denote poetry was *ceyyul* and according to the author it means not only verse, but many other types of composition besides. However such types do not have any wide currency. The elegance of poetic composition, *vanappu*, is said to be eight by Tolkāppiyar. Later critics had tried to equate all later literary production with one or the other of these. But these again had no currency, and what the author meant is obscure.

The chapter on *maruḷ* is important. It records many literary conventions for poetry. Many of them have passed out of use, but

yet it has helped in the evolution of the later nighandu (lexicon) writing.

A grammarian is normally concerned only with the letters, and syntax. It is indeed unique that Tolkāppiyar has taken up the study of the subject matter of poetry also in his grammatical treatise. We do not have any treatise earlier than his. But since he himself always says 'it is said', 'they say so', 'scholars say so', it is evident that there were earlier treatises which dealt with grammar in this manner. Hence we should take it that the tradition in Tamil is to consider the subject matter of poetry also, in a book on grammar.

It is not easy to recapture all the thoughts recorded in an analytical treatise of a thousand years ago, then the continuity is broken or forgotten. But the first commentator Ilampūraṇār has done this for Tolkāppiyam, by his commentary written a thousand years after the original. His commentary on the three books is fully available. It was the basis for Naccinārkiṇiyar who has also commented on the whole book. In between the two, many writers wrote glosses on the second book; the gloss by Senāvaraiyar is considered to be a masterpiece. Only a fragment of Pērāsiriyaṇār's commentary on poruḷ is available. These writers open out for us magic fields as it were of enchanting life thought, language, and literature, the richness and variety of which the Tamils could not have even dreamed of but for them. The richness of Tolkāppiyam far excels these.

#### (a) POETRY OF THE SAṅGHAM PERIOD

We had stated in a previous section that by the beginning of the Christian era, the Third Saṅgham had flourished at the side of the present city of Madurai and had produced quite a large volume of poetry. Although some portions of that poetry are said to have been irretrievably lost, we yet have quite a large volume available now. These are grouped under two major heads Eṭṭu-tohai and Pattup-pāṭṭu. Till recently, such groups as the 18 Kilk kaṇakku and the five so-called major epics were vaguely called saṅgham poetry; these are no longer called so and we here confine our discussions to the first two groups only.

Though we have mentioned the major heads here as two, following the literary history and convention, it may not be wrong to say that they are really one of nine anthologies, Pattup-pāṭṭu itself being in fact an anthology of long poems, while the first eight are anthologies of short lyrics.

#### ETTU-TOHAI:

As the name indicates, here we have eight anthologies (tohai-collection). Of the eight, six may belong to the earlier period of the saṅgham age, while two others may belong to the end of the period. It is probable that when these verses and groups of verses were collected together, a sort of classification was made and the anthologies numbered as eight. A later date verse however gives the eight anthologies in the following order: Paripāḍal, Kalittohai, Aha nānūru and Pura nānūru. But this has nothing to do with their subject matter or with the process of their compilation.

The following might have been the process of compilation. Paripāḍal contains only musical pieces and so it formed a separate book. Kalittohai, comprising of verses only in the Kalippā metre, form another separate book. 500 short verses, in groups of 100 each on the five regions, having aham as their subject matter, constitute a separate book called Ainkuru nūru. Ten groups of ten verses each in praise of ten Śērā kings form a separate book, by name Padirrup-pattu. About 1600 separate verses were now left. Of these 400 stray verses with puram as their subject constitute another book, Pura nānūru. Lastly, we have about 1200 verses having as their subject aham. The number was perhaps thought to be very large and so it was split up into three books, based on the length of each verse - verses with lines 5-8 constituted Kurun-tohai, or the compilation of the shortest verses; the next group contained lines 9-12 and was called Nāṇṇai; the last group containing poem which were left over had lines 13-31 and was called Nedun-tohai, longer verses or Aha nānūru. This surmise is possible because we find most of the poets singing songs which are found in several of the anthologies. Except Kalittohai and Paripāḍal all the others are in the āsiriyaṇ metre.

Another noteworthy feature is that the compiler, the patron and the number of poets are mentioned in respect of the five aham antho-

logies, but not in respect of the three puram collections Padittup-pattu, Parapaḍal and Puṇa nānūru. Perundēvanār who had written the Bharutam is said to have prefixed an invocatory verse, to the aham collections except the Kalittohai and to Puṇa nānūru.

Ettut-tohai (particularly the five books on aham) is essentially a collection and grouping of verses which are isolated and independent of one another. None of them is narrative poem. But yet, each little verse enacts a scene in a drama; to understand the scene and the poem, the reader has to know the speaker, the person spoken to, and the context. Naturally this dramatic setting has given rise to many conventions. The Poruladhikāram of Tolkāppiyar is a codification of these conventions.

We shall now examine the eight books in detail taking up the aham group first.

### THE FIRST THREE:

The three anthologies, Kuruntohai, Naṟṟinai and Aha nānūru are all love poems, sung by various authors. There are not only bards, but princes, women and brahmins also among the poets. The verses are all occasional verses, not set to any pattern. Almost all of them come from the mouth of some character, a hero, a heroine, his or her comrade, mother or a bystander. Hence the element of drama is always present. The poet never refers to himself but makes the character speak and act. A passing thought and a fleeting emotion are very vividly expressed in each verse, be it short or long. Similes and some elementary figures are never lacking; these only help the thought embedded in the character's words and give it greater force and vigour. Their very simplicity is the great hall-mark of their high poetry. The poet indents upon all nature to aid the emotional experience he is trying to put into words. Reading the few lines of the verse the reader will pause at every line; thoughts flit across his mind, and conjure up visions of nature, of life, which though simple in themselves yet are poignant with subtle strains of feeling and experience. All the verses in all the three books will easily lend themselves to this understanding. Verses relating to the five tinai are found in each anthology.

Apart from the size of the poem, there is not much difference in the poetic or lyrical content of the verses in each collection. The longer verses have greater imagery and drama, while the shorter ones are more crisp and sweeter, and more elegant.

### KURUN-TOHAI:

This collection consists of the shortest separate poems. There are 205 poets represented here. The collection was made by one Pūrikkō. The name of the patron - king is not given. The number of verses is 401. They are not arranged in any order. Some of the sweetest and simple love poems are in this collection.

### NARRINAI (NAL - TINAI):

This collection was made under the patronage of the Paṇḍiya king. Pannāḍu tanda māṇan vazudi; this king has also sung two verses in this collection and one in Kuruntohai. There are here 175 poets. The name of the compiler is not given. One verse in the book is missing.

### AHA NĀNŪRU:

This collection has 400 verses. It is said to have been collected together by Rudra sarma, son of Madurai Uppurikuḍi kilan under the patronage of Paṇḍiyan Ukkirap-peruvazudi. Many legends had been woven around these two names. It will suffice if we say that they are also mentioned in the commentary on Iraiyanār kalaviyal. The patron is said to have sung a verse each in Aha nānūru and naṟṟinai. The number of poets here is given as 145. This compilation unlike the others, has a curious arrangement of verses. Of the 400 numbers, all odd numbers are on the pālai tinai. i.e., 200 verses in effect. All tens on neidal; those having 4, 14, 24 etc, belong to mullai; 2 and 8 to kuṇinji; and 6 to marutam. Since Aha nānūru verses are the longest (upto 31 lines) the compiler perhaps made this artificial arrangement; this may also indicate that this compilation was arranged later than the other two. We see here that the poets sang most on the pālai tinai.

### AINKURU NŪRU:

Ainkuru nūru (the five short hundreds) is also in the āsiriyaṁ metre and contains the contribution of five poets on the five tinai. All

the verses are here very short, between 3 and 6 lines. Each hundred (sung by one poet) is divided into ten tens and each ten contains ten verses on the same theme. Often the opening phrases, and sometimes the first line itself, are repeated in each of the ten verses. This arrangement may tend to give a feeling of monotony. But in fact it is not so. As the verses are very short, the author has to plunge directly into his subject, without any padding or description. In some tens, each verse consists of only three lines; the first lines are repeated in full in all the ten; the author is left with only two lines for giving out his thoughts; but yet, he is able to paint a picture charged with emotion and subtle suggestion. The tens are named after animals and common objects, such as the elephant, the peacock, the crow and the bangle; abstract thoughts like yearning; the city of Tondi; and the utterances of the characters. Perhaps we may notice here a touch of folk lore in the choice of the titles. The arrangement of groups of verses into ten each, found here and in Padirrup-pattu had come to stay. Kural itself is composed of ten verses to each section. In later literary history, we find the entire Saiva and Vaisnava canon to be composed, of tens (padikams). Ainkuru nūru may be taken to be the fore runner of the refrain arrangement found in such padikam writing.

The collection was made by Kūlalūr kizār, under the patronage of the elephant-eyed Cērā, Māntarām Cēral - Irumpōrai. The compiler's songs (numbering four) are found in Kuruntohai and Pura nānūru.

#### KALIT-TOHAI:

Kalit-tohai on the other hand is not a short poem but quite a long one. Many of the verses, because of the metre, lend themselves to involved construction, which appears to be in harmony with involvement in the subject. If the verses of Kurun-tohai etc. are brilliant polished gems, those of Kalit-tohai are jewels, where many such gems are set to make a beautiful and dazzling design of colour and brilliance.

Each verse is an elaborate drama, an one act play, in which often more than one character act their parts. There is a beginning in the drama, a course of development and a fitting finish or climax, all within the

space of a single verse. The kalippa metre has different arrangements of feet, which can be long or short, and can also expand in parts according to the needs of the subject. Its diction also is sweet and musical and these lend to it a quality supple, chaste and well judged, often graceful and refined; far akin to the English blank verse. The change of moods, the play of emotions and the delineation of characters are all very well expressed in the kali verses. This kind of elasticity has led critics to conclude that Kalit-tohai can be only a later composition, though of the Sangham period; but this need not necessarily be so.

This collection was made by Nallānduvanār, who had also written its section on neidal.

#### PADIRRUP-PATTU:

Next we come to the two puram poems. Padirrup-pattu and Pura nānūru. The puram themes generally comprise all themes not contained in aham poetry. They mostly deal with war and peace, giving and receiving, ethics and the larger truths bearing on life in general. Padirrup-pattu, as stated before, is ten tens, each ten glorifying the valour and benevolence of a Cērā prince; this praise of the Cērā is a unique feature; such exclusive praise in a distinct group of verses had not been extended to the other princes. The princes had rewarded the poets magnificently. Another unique feature of these poems is that a happy expression had been chosen from each verse and given as its title. As poetry, this poem is even more rugged than Pura nānūru. The poem mentions a settlement of Yavanar, perhaps the Ionian Greeks, and this helps scholars to fix the date of the Sangham. The first and the last tens of the collection are missing.

#### PURA NĀNŪRU:

Pura nānūru occupies a unique place not only in the Sangham poetry; not only in the History of the Tamil Literature, but also in the History of the Tamil race and its culture. It is not possible even to refer to its many contributions to the History of our culture in this short survey, but we shall merely refer to a few. There is a brilliant galaxy of great writers, men and women, bards and kings, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, who have contributed poems to the



work King Nedunceziyan sings of the importance of education. Friendship means intensity of feeling and not frequent personal contact; the story of Kōpperum Cōzā and Pisir Āndai is a monumental example. A defeated prince dies of thirst, rather than get water as a captive from the warder who is in charge of his prison. Many are the poems which portray the bravery and heroism of women as mothers and as wives. The queen of Bhutta Pāṇḍiya rebukes the elders who dissuade her from giving up her life on the death of her husband, and valiantly and dutifully dies in the flames which consume his body. Another poet advises the ruler against indiscriminate taxation; the ruler should realise that the king, and not food and water, is the sustenance for the subjects. The world goes by the services of self-sacrificing individuals who ceaselessly strive for the welfare of humanity.

Any place is my place and the whole world is kin; the good and the bad do not accrue from another; death has always been there; living is neither sweet nor bitter; life goes on in the manner ordained; we neither bow to the great nor taunt the lowly says one poet.

All persons, be they princes or peasants, require only a measure of rice for food and two bits of cloth to cover the body; other needs are equal; hence the best use of riches is giving; if we expect to enjoy everything most will escape us says another.

A Cōzā prince says : There are people like the little field mouse, which fills its hole with the mature grains in the fields. There are yet others like the valiant tiger, which pursuing a wild boar for food, declines to eat it because it fell to its left; it goes without food that day, and the next day it fells a he-elephant on its right and eats it; let me have more days of companionship with men of such calibre.

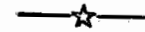
Says King Nedūnceziyan : If I do not carry out my word in crushing my foes . . . . . may poets cease to sing the praises of my kingdom . . . . . This asseveration indicates the great esteem in which the rulers held the poets and their composition in those days.

These instances are sufficient to give a glimpse of the lofty ideals and noble culture of the Tamils two thousand years ago.

157 poets and 128 kings and chiefs are represented in this collection.

## PARIPĀDAL :

Lastly we take up Paripāḍal. It is a kind of musical verse whose very pattern and music have long been wholly lost. We have now only 22 out of the original 70 verses in the book. A Colophon under each verse gives the name of the author, the musical mode and the name of the musician who wrote the notation. The songs are in praise of Muruga, Tirumāl, the city of Madurai, and the river Vaigai. That its thought content was of a very high quality, there is no doubt; a poet says, "My Lord, I do not pray for wealth or gold, or for the pleasures of life". I pray Thee, grant me compassion, love and charity. A large number of love themes are also treated in Paripāḍal. Enjoyment of life at its fullest can be found here; the songs on Vaigai speak of a rich and luxurious enjoyment of the river-side; in this sense it has no parallel in literature.





## LESSON—5

## LITERARY HERITAGE—(contd.)

## II. PATTUP-PATTU:

Pattup-pattu or the Ten Idylls are ten long separate poems in the Āsiriyaṃ metre, ranging from 103 to 782 lines. Of the ten, six are on puram and four are on aham; again of the six, five are of the pra-bandha, ārup-padaṭṭai type. Of the six, one is in praise of Lord Muruga, while four are in praise of kings, and the last in praise of a local chief. Again, among the poets, Muḍat-tāmakkaṇṇi is a woman who sang in praise of Kaṛikāl Cōza. Two poems each have been sung by Nakkīrar and Rudraṃ Kaṇṇaṇār. Two of the major poets of the period, Kapilar, Nakkīrar have sung in this group. The Cōza King Kaṛikāla and the Pāndiya King Neḍuñceliyaṇ are some of those eulogised here.

We shall now proceed to examine each poem briefly in the order in which it is found in Pattup-pattu collection.

1. Tiru Murugāruppaḍai by Nakkīrar is probably placed first in the Pattup-pattu as an invocatory poem for the collection of ten. It is in praise of the traditional six camps of Lord Muruga. One who has enjoyed the grace of the Lord directs another to the presence. He describes the six places vividly. Description of nature, the manner of worship, the disciplined ways of His devotees, the life of the hill tribes and the conferment of His grace are all dealt with in graphic language. While speaking of the second shrine, the author describes at length the six countenances and the twelve arms of Muruga. The poem, though terse and difficult of comprehension, is repeated by rote today in thousands of Tamil homes as a devotional song, sometimes by semi-literates also. Muruga here is not any deity, but a manifestation of the Absolute.

2. Poruṃar-āruppaḍai by the poetess, Muḍattāmakkaṇṇa, directs the bard, who is a singer of battles, to go and get presents from King Kaṛikāla. The popular legend that Prince Kaṛikāla, though very young in years, assumed a garb of mature age in order to make two contesting parties have faith in his wisdom and judgement, is also referred to here. A great tribute is paid to the Kāvēri; the battle of the king

at Venni is celebrated here. A tribute is also paid to the Pālaip-pan (a musical mode) which is said to be capable of winning over even the wild robbers of the desert. The poem is in the āsiriyaṃ metre as is usual with all Sangham poetry; but yet there are many lines in the Vaṇji is rare. The other works which have a large number of the Vaṇji lines are Madurai-Kāñji and Pattinappālai.

3. Siru-pāṇ ārupaḍai is in praise of Nalluiyakkōḍan to whom the author Nattattanār directs a bard. Pānar are the bards who sing to the accompaniment of their instrument, the yāz. The yāz is of two kinds the, smaller one and the bigger one and the Pāṇās themselves are known after the instruments siru-yāz and pēri-yāz which they practised, as the sirupāṇar and the perumpāṇar; we have here two ārup-padaṭṭais relating to the two classes of pāṇas. Of the two paṇ poems in this group, this is the shorter one. The bard's wife is described in detail, the cities of Tamiznadu are celebrated and the generosity of the patron is extolled. The poem refers to the seven vallās (patrons) of the Sangham age and says that this patron has the virtues of all the seven put together.

4. Peruṃ-pāṇ-āruppaḍai : Here Rudraṃ kaṇṇaṇār directs a bard to Ilantiraiyaṇ of Kañci. The bard's instrument is described in detail, the hardships of travel, the people of the plains, the brahmin way of life, the coase, the city and the generosity of the patron are all given out in detail. The picture of the region of the five tiṇais, the respective people and their hospitality the hospitalities of the brahmins etc. are done in a very interesting manner. The description of Kāñci-puram and its festivals gives us perhaps a picture of pre-Pallava days. Viṣṇu at Tiru-Vehhā in the city referred to.

5. Mullaip-pattu is the shortest poem in this group. The hero leaves his wife for the battle front. Elders console her to bear with separation bravely. The war is over and he returns happily home. Many a description of the war front is given here, as well as the pangs of separation in the two, and also a description of the rainy season. The poem is by Nappūtanaṇ. Mullai is the forest region. Omens, some elephant lore, and life in the encampments of the battle front are some of the chief features here.

6. Maduraik kārji is the longest poem, sung by Mānguḍi Maruḍa, to instruct the Pāṇḍiya King Neḍuñceziyan of the transcendence of life. The several battles of the Pāṇḍiya, the prosperity of the city, its market place, the entertainments of the people, the festivities and similar things are described. Kārji means the transcendence of life. Some of the description, here serve as illustrations of the puram topics of poruladhikāram. The poem has also a number of references to contemporary history.

7. Neḍumalvāḍi is by Nakkīrar. Pāṇḍiyan Neḍuñceziyan has gone to the battle front. There he goes a round of the battle field at dead of night, anxiously ministering to the wounded soldiers and animals. The heroine worships Korraṇai and prays for his speedy return. The description of the winter is remarkable. This is a neidal poem; one of despair under separation. This is considered to be one of the best poetic pieces of the period.

8. Kuriṇṇip-pattu is by Kapilar, intended to teach the Ārya prince Bṛhatta the beauties of Tamil (love poetry). Kuriṇṇi is the full tract. The poem speaks of clandestine love. Here, while saying that the heroine gathered flowers and piled them on a piece of rock, the author enumerates one hundred flowers. This is a glowing tribute to the author's observation of nature and his knowledge of the botanical science. Muraṅga the Lord of Kuriṇṇi is celebrated in a fitting manner. Perhaps Bṛhatta mastered Tamil love poetry so well that he was himself able to compose a poem on the subject.

9. Pattinip-palai: This is also by the poet Rudraṁ Kannaṇār in praise of Karikala. The king gave him 160 million gold coins as a present for the song. Palai is the desert region. The city of Kāveripattinam is introduced here in all its maritime glory. The poet here describes the greatness, the richness and the wonderful culture of the Coza capital and state, and gives us a peep into the daily life of the people as it was lived two thousand years ago. The poem has a historical as well as a literary importance. Although the poet tries to give it an abham colouring it is definitely a puram poem. We do not know anything about the author, who was certainly patronised by King Karikala. The fourth poem of this collection was also written by him. The place is known as Kaḍiyalūr, but it has not been located.

10. Malaipaḍukaḍām is also known as Kūttarāṅgappaḍai. Perum Kauṣikā has sung the poem in praise of Nanna. As the name signifies, the poem celebrates music, musical instruments and musicians. The particulars of musical instruments and details of the life of the hill tribes which we get here are not to be had elsewhere. A description of the path leading to the hill of Nanna makes interesting reading.

These poems constitute Pattup-pāṭṭu. A carefree life, an enjoyment of the good things thereof, love of nature, generosity and giving—all these are the keynote of the life of those days. The group has a wonderful commentary by the great writer Naccinārkkiniyar. We do not know who gathered together these ten poems or who gave them the title Pattup-pāṭṭu. There are here separate poems on kuriṇṇi, mullai, neydaḷ and pālai but not on marutam.

Such is the picture of Sangham poetry that we are able to gather. This poetry has about 2380 verses, long and short, said to be written by 473 poets. (There is many a repetition in the names of the poets, and, on a careful study of the texts some of them may be seen to be quite unnecessary). Kapilar has sung the largest number of verses. Excluding those five who have sung Aingurūnūru (each has 100 verses to his credit here) we find that Avvai has sung quite a large number of verses — 59. The poets represent a cross section of society at all levels. We see the poets were all poor. Yet they had a very cordial relationship with the kings and the chiefs. Material good were of the least count; fearlessness, an upright conduct and service to humanity, were considered the most valuable traits.

#### (b) AIMPERUM-KAPPIYANGAL

#### (THE FIVE MAIN EPICS)

#### EPIC LITERATURE:

Hero worship has been an important trait of human nature throughout the centuries, among all the nations of the world. This trait has manifested itself in literature as the epic. Every nation has its own heroes and they are also the greatest characters in their epics. The epic literature thus deals with the basic aspirations and ideals of the nation as portrayed in the lives of their heroes in life and legend.

In spite of all racial feelings whipped up to a frenzied pitch by political agitators, it is not wrong to say that the stories of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa have continued to be national treasures from a hoary past. The fragmentary references to their stories and to the translations of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata found in Tamil literature and in inscriptions bear ample testimony to this. But somehow the first attempts at this kind of Tamil epic writing is lost to us today.

Yet we have a very wide range of epic literature from the beginnings of Tamil literary history down to the 16th century. Later grammatical treatises define the content and compositions of various types of literature. In the book on rhetoric by Daṇḍī, we have the first definition of epic, a *perum-kāppiyam*. Almost all the great epics in the Tamil language had been written before the days of Daṇḍī. His definition had naturally been drawn from those epics; he had also freely borrowed ideas from Sanskrit literature.

#### THE EARLY EPICS:

No single standard can be applied to all the Tamil epics. Often we find critics trained in western concepts and methods of literary criticism applying their own yardsticks to measure the worth or standard of the epics. It is good to know the western standards and methods but it is wrong to apply them as they are to our epics and pronounce a judgement on them. Each epic poem should be evaluated not by any external standard but only by the author's own aim and purpose in writing it. Each has a different aim and the real critic's evaluation is valid only if it agrees how this aim has been attained.

The grouping of the Tamil epic as the major five and the minor five is all a myth - it has no validity, from the point of view of the content of the epic poem or of history. The so-called major epics are not *temple poetry*. They belong to a much later age.

*Cilappatikāram* is the first Tamil epic we have today. The story revolves round the suitor of Kaṇṇaki in trying to sell which, her husband was ordered to be killed by the Pāṇḍya prince, on a charge of theft. When he came to know how he was killed, she flew into a righteous fury, proved her husband's innocence to the prince, burnt his city Madurai and later became one of the celestials. The epic has a

great heroine but no hero. The story is very simple and has absolutely no involvement. Just because Prince Cenkuttuvan was introduced into the story in the third book of the epic, which is in the nature of a later addition, Tamil lovers fondly contend that the whole story is a historical narrative, forgetting that the epic was conceived by the poet with a definite purpose and is purely an imaginative romantic tragedy. Maṅgō, the author, was great poet well versed in Tamil letters, music and drama, and he seems to have invented the story of Kaṇṇaki to bring into play therein these three divisions of Tamil poetry. He has marvellously succeeded in his aim and today the only book which treats of these three divisions of Tamil is his book and no other. The prologue says that he wrote the book to uphold three truths - that dharma will destroy one who serves from a just rule, that the great will always celebrate the chastity of woman, and that karma will adduce the fruits of one's action. The author has eminently succeeded in this also. Incidentally, he has also sung the greatness of the ruling dynasties in the Tamiznadu of his days, and in a sense preached tolerance and respect towards the other religions. These are the main ingredients of his story and the purpose of his writing. It will be puerile to look for other things in his poem - such as character delineation and similar aspects which are considered important in western literary criticism.

*Maṇimekalai*, said to be a sequel to *Cilappatikāram*, can in no way claim to be an epic. It is the story of a young woman, who decided to fall into the snares of love because of the tragic story of her mother's love. She made a detailed investigation of the doctrines of various religious sects and ultimately entered the holy orders of Buddhism. Its only importance lies in its antiquity and in the fact that it is the only Buddhist work extant.

*Perumkāḍai* is the next important book. It was rescued from total extinction by Dr. Sāminātha Ayyar and published as a handsome volume, although its opening and concluding chapters are missing. It is the story of Prince Udayaman, his many love affairs, the affairs of his son, and his ultimate renunciation. The plot in this epic is not closely knit, because of the narrative which is a mere jumble of war, love, marriage and jealousy and so on. There is no pronounced Jain propaganda here as Buddhism in *Maṇimekalai*. But *Perumkāḍai*

(great story) is important to Tamil literary history for its descriptions of the life of the Tamilians at the regal level - palaces, their glory and splendour, their arts, music and dance, their games, craftsmanship and other skills. The author, Koṅṅy vēḷir, lived in a corner of the Tamil country, far removed from the main stream of Tamiz culture and civilization. Probably he had an occasion to tour the Tamiznāḍu and what he witnessed there - the luxury of the people, their day to day life, the glories of their nobility, men and women, their play pastimes, the beauty of their womanhood, and their joys and pleasures in life - made such an indelible impression on him that, perhaps to eulogise this glory of life he embarked on the task of writing the epic.

The next two important works are Jivaka cintāmani and Cūḷamani, both Jain works. Except for occasional flashes of poetry, there is neither plot nor character in them. They are one long series of adventure, armour fighting, culminating in the Jain way of renunciation.

#### THE TWIN EPICS: CILAPPADHIKĀRAM AND MANIMEKALAI

This is a novel term invented in the second quarter of this century to denote Cilappadhikāram and Manimēkhalai. We shall do well to remember that the two are not epics and are not twins. We reserve this term to the end.

#### CILAPPADHIKĀRAM:

Cilappadhikāram the story of the anklet, is hailed as the first epic poem in the Tamiz language. It is in the āṣiriyam metre, the metre in which most of the Sangham poetry was written. The occurrence of the story is placed in the three cities Puhār (kāverip-pattinam), Madurai and Vanji, which were the capitals of the Cōzas, the Pāṇḍiyās and the Cēras. Accordingly it is divided into the three respective cantos. Kaṇṇaki, the daughter of a rich merchant in Puhār is married to Kōvalan, the son of another rich merchant there; the story of these two is Cilappadhikāram.

Kōvalan is enchanted by the dance of a young dancing girl, Mādhavi, in the king's court and forsaking Kaṇṇaki, he lives with Mādhavi. The two are very much attached to each other. A girl is

born to them. There is the national festival called Indira vizā. The two move to the beach in the course of the festivals and there they sing love-songs to the accompaniment of the yāz. From Mādhavi's song, Kōvalan suspects quite wrongly of course that she is in love with another, and deserting her, he returns to Kaṇṇaki. He had till that day spent all his wealth and all the jewels of Kaṇṇaki. As the dutiful Hindu wife that she really was, offers him her anklets, which were the only trinkets now left with her. Kōvalan, who is now wholly crestfallen, proposes to sell them in Madurai and engage in business there so that he may again acquire riches. So, taking Kaṇṇaki with him, he marches out of the city at night. On the way, they are befriended by Kaunti aḍigal, a Jain nun, who acts as a sort of chaperon for Kaṇṇaki.

The Madurai part of the story then begins. Kaunti leaves them both in the care of a woman of the cowherd's class, as "that was the one class which knew no evil". Kaṇṇaki prepares his food and serves him. An earlier dream makes Kōvalan very uneasy. He leaves for the city bazaar to sell one anklet. He is met by a goldsmith who had stolen the queen's anklet. Planning to foist his theft on innocent Kōvalan, the goldsmith seeks the king's presence. The king is just then, kirked by the sulking queen, who is angry that he evinced undue interest in the dance of a danceuse in the royal court just then. When the jeweller tells him of the stolen anklet, the king intending to say, bring him to be killed, actually said, "kill him and bring the anklet here", out of an apparent anxiety to please his queen. The words of the jeweller could not convince the executioners that Kōvalan was a thief; but one among them, a hasty drunkard, fells Kōvalan with a sweep of his sword. (Theft was punished with beheading in those days). The news spreads fast and, in the cowherds quarters, they see many ill omens. The news reaches them. Kaṇṇaki rushes to the court to prove her husband's innocence. As she goes along the city streets crying and challenging, the Sun god replies: "Your husband is no thief; fire will consume this city which called him a thief". She sees the lifeless body of Kōvalan. The body comes to life. Kōvalan embraces her and leaving her there, departs to a celestial abode. She meets the king, accuses him of unjustly killing her husband, and shows him her other anklet. The Pandyan country is famous as the producer of pearls. His queen's

anklet would naturally have encased a pearl in its core; but Kaṇṇaki's anklet contained a ruby. Seeing it, the king realises his injustice and instantly gives up his life. The queen follows. Kaṇṇaki not yet appeased, plucks her left breast and throws it at the city. The god of fire appears and at her command consumes the city. She leaves the city, goes west, and from the top of a hill in the Koṅgu country, she ascends to the celestial regions.

The happenings in the Cēra land form the third part. The hill tribes who witness her ascent to the heaven from their hill, report it to the Cēra King. Ceṇkuṭṭuvan. Induced by his queen, he plans to install an image of Kaṇṇaki for worship and so takes out an expedition to the Himalayas to bring a stone for carving out the image. Vanquishing two princes in the north who jeered at the Tamils, he brings the stone on their heads. When the temple is consecrated, a vision of Kaṇṇaki appears. She is now fully appeased. Many princes go there to worship her, including Gajabāhu from Ceylon.

Ilaṅgō Adigaḷ, brother of Cēra Ceṇkuṭṭuvan, was with him when the hill people narrated the ascension of Kaṇṇaki to the heavens and when the poet Sāttan, who was present, narrated to them her full story. He requested Ilaṅgō to write her story in the form of an epic, suited to the three ruling houses, saying that he himself had already written the story of the daughter of Mādhavi. Thereupon Ilaṅgō wrote this poem to illustrate three truths.

The poem as we have it today consists of three books and thirty chapters. The metre employed is the āsiriyaṁ, but throughout the book we have many musical pieces written, in different metres: they form an important part of the book also. The dance of Mādhavi which is the origin of the entire story has been elaborated by the author to such an extent that the poem itself has come to be called a dramatic epic. Later, musical pieces are introduced in the song of the ball game, the pestle, the swing and so on. Naturally these lead us to conclude that the author took the motifs for these from the folk songs current in his time at various levels.

Cilappadhikāram is a tragedy which reaches its climax with the burning of the city of Madurai by Kaṇṇaki. But the Indian tradition

of art and letters would not consider tragedy as the end of any art and so the story in the third part was invented and probably added on much later, bringing together many popular stories, and some fact and more fiction. The author is never mentioned in the first two books but the third gives biography and makes him a contemporary of Sāttan, who is said to be a personal witness of some of the happenings in the story, with the addition of the Vaṇṇik kāṇḍam. What was mere fiction has been sought to be made into history and Kaṇṇaki is made into a historical figure. Many tutelary deities are worshipped in different parts of the Tamilnadu in different names such as Māri, Draupadi, Celli etc., and these are all now sought to be identified with Kaṇṇaki and the Kaṇṇaki cult a new cult based on this fiction, is taking shape. Passions have been aroused and Kaṇṇaki is hailed as the flower of the Dravidian culture. The spirit of Ilaṅgō would certainly turn in its grave if it were to know how its heroine is being distorted and glorified as god.

But, the question of age, the Paṭṭini cult and the historicity of Kaṇṇaki apart, the poem is a grand poem. The three books, Kural, Cilappadhikāram and Kamba Rāmāyaṇam are considered to be choicest products of the Tamil Muse and deservedly so. The author bestows generous praise on the Cōzā and the Pāṇḍiya, (and on the Cēra in the third part) and in this sense it is an epic for the three ruling dynasties of Tamiznāḍu. It is the only book extant dealing with the three divisions of Tamiz-iyal, isai and nāṭakam. It deals with all the regions dealt with in Tamil grammar and speaks at length of people in all classes of society. No other work brings out the joys and aspirations of the lower classes as vividly as this epic. The fact that its heroine and hero are taken not from royalty, but from the common people, is significant. Another feature is the reverence shown by the author to all systems of religion. He speaks of Siva, of Muruga, of Viṣṇu, of Śakti, and of Arha as though he is an ardent devotee of each particular god. His devotion transcends commonness. Such catholicity is rare in later literature. Maṇimēkhalai, said to be also an epic and a sequel to this book is in sharp contrast to Cilappadhikāram in this respect. Its author speaks like an intolerant bigot in decrying other religions, particularly Jainism. As already noted, Cilappadhikāram is unique, and perhaps the only tragedy in Tamil literary history.

The poem quotes Kural and so its age can be much later than Kural. One point is that it could not have been composed during the Kalabhra period, that is between 250 to 300 A.D. Probably we may assign the period about 200 to 250 A.D. to be the date for the main Cilappadhikāram text, and the period 250 to 300 A.D. as the period when the later later interpolations such as the third book were added.

#### MANIMEKKHALAI:

Manimekhalai is considered to be an epic also and a sequel to Cilappadhikāram. Manimekhalai was the daughter of Mādhavi and Kōvalan. When he was unjustly killed, she resolved that her own daughter should no more take part in dances. But her own mother felt that it was not proper for a dancer to abandon her profession, and so helped Udayakumāra, the prince of the land, to court her. Manimekhalai on the other hand would follow her own mother's advice and would have nothing to do with him. When he importunes her, her guardian angel, Manimekhalai after whom she was herself named, lifts her up by air to a distant place, endows her with some super human powers and causes her to come by a magic bowl which, when filled by the hand of a chaste lady, would go on issuing food eternally. There she remains in the land which she helps to relieve with her bowl. To avoid the attentions of the prince again, she takes on the guise of a well known woman there, whose husband coming on the scene, finds the prince pursuing her, and thinking it is his wife, kills him. The prince's mother gets angry with Manimekhalai and tries to harm her in several ways, but she always escapes. She then learns the various schools of philosophy. While thus engaged she learns that the city of Kaverippattinam, capital of the Cōzās and her mother's place, was washed away by the sea. She then goes to Kāñcīpuram. Aravāna Adigal, an enlightened Buddhist seer and saint, teaches her the Buddhist philosophy. She then performs tapas (or penance) to end all future births.

The story of Manimekhalai is all a jumble; there is no plot, no hero and she is herself a very poor heroine. The only purpose of the poem is to propagate the Buddhist religion and philosophy. In this the author has achieved a certain amount of success. In this aspect, namely that of religious disputation this poem is the fore runner of many

such later writing. Chapters 27 and 29 of the book dealing with the heroine's learning the other religions and the Buddhist religion, are a mine of information on Buddhist logic and philosophy, which are not to be found elsewhere in the Tamil language.

The book is like Silappadhikāram in the āsiriyaṁ metre and contains the same number of thirty chapters (over 4800) lines. There the similarity ends. This book does not deal with mut - Tamil; it does not deal with the three ruling kingdoms; it does not speak about the need for the king to uphold a just rule; nor about the homage of the great to the chaste women. It speaks no doubt of karma and how it will bear fruit in subsequent births. It refers to more than a score of puranic legends. It does not employ any other metre anywhere, except the āsiriyaṁ; it does not have musical pieces; it does not pay homage to other gods and deities and Cilappadhikāram ungrudgingly does. But where it praises the Buddha we have some good lyrical poetry.

Though Manimekhalai refutes nine schools of thought its chief target for attack is the Jain school. The author is very intolerant in ridiculing the Jain religion.

Sāttan is said to be author of his poem; the epithets Kūlvāṇikan (trader in groceries) and Cīttalai are two epithets generally employed to qualify the name Cāttan. But Cilappadhikāram does not mention Cīttalai; it merely says "the Tamil teacher Cāttan". Cāttan always signifies Sasta, one of the village tutelary deities. The Vañjik-kāṇḍam of Cilappadhikāram says that Ceṅkuttuvan and Ilaṅgō learnt the story of Kaṇṇaki from the lips of Cāttanār, who said he had already sung the story of Manimekhalai taking the holy orders. Chapter 26 of the poem speaks of Ceṅkuttuvan's expedition to the Himalayas to get the proper stone for making Kaṇṇaki's image. Obviously it could not be that Cāttan narrated this story, even before Ceṅkuttuvan had heard of Kaṇṇaki or had ever marched north. Hence the statement that Cāttan told the story of Kaṇṇaki to the brothers at Vañji and also that he had already sung about the renunciation of Manimekhalai are a mere myth.

As noted earlier, this poem makes good poetry in places, but is hardly conceivable as an epic as we understand it. Though it has no



story interest, the fact remains that it is woven round the wanderings of a woman. The Kalabhras, invaders of Mādurai from an alien land, held sway there for three centuries, the third to the sixth A.D. They were of the Digambarā Jain sect, which suppressed women, music and all worldly pleasures. Generally poetry in praise of women could not have been written during that period. History tell us that Pāṇḍiya Kaduṅkon put to route the Kalabhras and rescued the land from them. This was in A.D. 575. Manimēkhalai could have been composed only after this date, that is by about 600 A.D. Perhaps the third book of Cālapadhikāram the Vaṅjikkāṇḍam was also added on at about the same time.

It will be clear from what has been said here that Manimēkhalai is no epic; and considering the lapse of three centuries between the two poems they cannot be called twin epics.

#### JIVAKA CINTĀMANI:

Jivaka Cintāmani, by the Jain monk Tiru-Takka dēvar is in the Cāntam metre, running to 3150 verses. It is a true Jain work in this that it preaches the Jain way of austerity in life. But the story and the author's narration it are anything but austere. We shall first give here in brief the story of the poem. Saccanda, ruler of the kingdom of Uraṅgaḍa, gave himself up to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, along with his newly wedded queen Vijayā, handing over the administration of the state to his minister Kattiyaṅkāra. The minister gradually built up his power and one day raided the king's palace. Expecting such a manoeuvre, the king had caused a flying machine to be built, on which he now sent away his queen who was then in an advanced state of pregnancy. In the fighting the king died. The queen landed on a cremation ground where a son was born to her and was called Jivaka. He was brought up by a merchant of the city. In due time the boy grew up and learned from his teacher his real parentage. The herd of cattle of the local chief of cowherds were driven away by brigands from the hills. No one was able to rescue the herds from them. Jivaka fought with hunters and brought back the herds. The chief gave away his daughter in marriage to Jivaka the victor, but Jivaka, because he was of different caste, accepted her in marriage on behalf of his comrade Padumukha, who was of the cowherd's clan.

Thus begin the marriage adventures of Jivaka. Next, he defeated Gāndharvadatta, a prince from the celestial world in a musical contest and married her, much to the chagrin of Kattiyaṅkāra. Two girls, Guṇamālai and Suramāñjari entered into a contest of making toilet powder, and appointed Jivaka as the judge. He had adjudged that of Guṇamālai as the superior one. Enraged, Suramāñjari shut herself up in a convent, vowing that she would make him go to her. The State elephant in a mad fury attacked Guṇamālai and he rescued her and now married her. As he was then in trouble with Kattiyaṅkāra, Sudanjana Deva, who owed his liberation from a dog's birth to the uttering of mantras by Jivaka, took him away from the city by air. Another prince Padmā was bitten by a snake; he removed the snake poison and married her. In another place Kemasari, daughter of a merchant was long without a marriage; the astrologer had said that she would marry the person on seeing whom she would show signs of shyness. She felt shy on seeing Jivaka and so she married him. Going to another place, he taught archery to the princes of the land and married their sister Kanakamālai. Then he met for the first time his mother, who parted from him at this birth. In another place girls were engaged in a ball game and Vimalai, the daughter of a rich merchant of the place running after the ball saw him and fell in love with him. He went to a shop, which happened to be that merchant's shop and sat there. Immediately all merchandise, which was heaped up there unsold for long were sold away. As this was in keeping with words of a sooth-sayer, she was given to him in marriage. Then he enticed Suramāñjari with his music and married her. Next he went to a tryst organised by his uncle Gōvīndan, King of Vidēha, to the effect that he who shot an arrow at a rotating target could marry his daughter Ilakkanai. Jivaka shot the target and won her hand, but Kattiyaṅkāra was enraged at his appearance there and in the fight that ensued Jivaka killed him and married Ilakkanai. Next he ascended the throne with his eight wives. After sometime he realised the transience of all worldly things and, making his son King, renounced the world and after due penance attained the ultimate blissful state.

Cintāmani, is so called because it is said one may get satisfaction, in this book in all fields that he can think of (Cintāmani - gem which grants one's wishes). It is also called the manni nil (book of marriage).

ge), which seems fully justified from the love adventures of the hero. The austerity of life that should be the predominant note of Jain literature is prominent by its absence in this book. The work is a very ambitious one, but its chief note is sensuousness.

Cintāmani has an important place in the history of Tamil literature in this that it is the first book to employ the viruttam metre in long continuous narrative. This metre had been employed to great effect by the Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva Canon writer of the 7th to the 9th Centuries, but it is extremely unlikely that the Jain monks who mostly lived a cloistered life in those days (9th century) could have known the hymns. Hence the attempt of Devar may be taken as his own innovation based on the Kallipā and the musical pieces in Cillappadhikaram. His attempt was a marvellous success, so far as he was concerned, although it is crude and unpolished. But perfection in the metre was attained by Kambar who was his contemporary because he had studied both the Śaiva and the Vaiṣṇava canons very well. There may be many happy turns of expression, picturesque language, realistic and arresting description, in Cintāmani, but the book falls short being great poetry. There is no character delineation, no drama, no play of the basic emotions and no portrayal of human nature - in short there is nothing in it, that can be called great poetry. Exposition of the Jain philosophy is the most negligible part of the book.

### TIRUKKURAL

The perfection of Tamizan thought and its greatest contribution to world thought on all problems of life is agreed among all thinkers to be Tirukkural. It is universally acclaimed as the greatest Tamiz classic. It has "two aspects to its greatness - the most profound thought on the most baffling problems of existence and the most astounding economy of words and finish of style. Kural is the one book in Tamiz about which thousands of pages have been written, both in Tamiz and in English. But unfortunately, every thing about Kural is uncertain - the author, his place, his class in society, his religion, his age, his profession in life; and Vaiyāpuri Pillai had taken elaborate pains to prove that the thoughts of Kural were adaptations of Sanskrit. In this respect we may hazard a remark in a light vein that Kural is like God

everything about both is so uncertain! whole volumes can be filled discussing these questions, but in the space of a few pages which we devote to the book here, we cannot even touch upon the vast magnitude of the writing on these points. However, we shall briefly mention all these points before proceeding to speak about the work.

### THE AUTHOR:

Jains used to say that the author was a Jain preceptor by name Kunda Kundacaraya and that he was not Tiruvalluvar. Others have said that he was a friend of one merchant by name Rikasinga. We have to dismiss all such stories as fiction, as fantastic myths. One legend says he was born in Mylapore; another says he took to the Jain Saṅgham at Madurai to get its seal of approval. Both these do not ring true; and yet there is no improbability in them. The first legend says that he was a cast away child, of the lowest class in society. The term Valluvar signifies a member of that community, a state public drummer. But a careful study of Kural not once but several times over, will give any one the feeling that the book could not have been written by one of the lowest class, however gifted or inspired he might be, and however deep his experience of life might be. A verse in the Tiruvalluymālai even goes to the extent of saying that the ignorant would say that he was a member of the Valluvar tribe but sensible persons ignore the statement.

### KURAL:

Kural means short; it is a variant of the venbā metre and has only two lines, having four and three feet in each line. The book takes its name from the metre. The Kural Venbā is not an easy type of metre; there is a specific arrangement in the linking of the feet of the verse (called ven-talai), which has to be scrupulously adhered to. Besides, there is a rhyme and alliteration; though the author does not very much adhere to these, he is generally particular to see that if the first word of both the lines in each couplet do not rhyme together, the first and the last words of the first line rhyme together. Besides, the Kural Venbā has an internal rhythm and cadence which are born not only out of the word arrangement but also by the thought content. The author has achieved this in a full measure.



It is called Tiruk-kural; Tiru (sacred) is a Tamil prefix added to express the people's high esteem of the work. It consists of three books and 133 chapters, with ten verses to each chapter. The first four chapters are a kind of preface; the first book, Arattuppāl has 38 chapters (including the preface), the second Porutpāl 70 chapters, and the third Kāmattuppāl 25 chapters. The work may thus be seen to be arranged in the traditional manner of the first three goals of life. The fourth goal, liberation, has not been separately dealt with by the author. He seems to imply that one who leads a righteous life will eventually obtain release on the natural culmination of this life.

It is a great tribute to the author that all sects in the Tamil claim him as their own. The Śaivas, the Vaiṣṇavas and the Jainas claim as their own poet; since there are no Buddhists here, we are not aware of their claim. Christians of the modern day claim him as their own. It need not cause us any surprise if all great thinkers claim him as their own to the end of time, because he went through life with a humble, pure and unbiased mind that was not clouded with current prejudices, because he stored the ripe and rich experience of all avenues of life in his heart and always gave expression to the mature wisdom that resulted from that experience, in the shortest and most artistic form. The poetry was not addressed to any external being but was merely an expression on an inward peace and joy. Even the greatest sorrows and tragedy leave behind a feeling of peace in the cultured mind; from peace joy is born, and only gives rise to the sweetest poetry.

Kural lays down a code of ethics which is universal and at the same time eternal. Time and space do not limit its concepts, whereas in Sanskrit, it is never universal; it is bound up with class (varna) and with exigency. In the porutpāl, he draws up an ideal code for rulers and administrators; this is based on what we would call a code of Gandhian Truth and Love (Non-violence). In this sense, it is unparalleled in the world of law books, not only in Sanskrit. No element of untruth or violence enters into the author's dictum here. This claim cannot be made of the Sanskrit Artha Sāstras. Now going to the third part love, he speaks of love, a union of two souls which transcends the body. There is absolutely no element of vulgarity; physical love has never been exalted and any one can be allowed to

study this part without the least hesitation that its thoughts may taint the young mind. The author might have known the Sanskrit book on the three subjects of aram, poruḥ and inbam and probably that was the reason he had striven to write a classic on the three which could be much more ideal and lofty than the thoughts contained in the Sanskrit books and which could serve as a beacon light for all time and to all mankind. His concept of humanity, coming in the line of the poet who sang "yādum ūre yāvaurm kēlir" (all place is my place and all people are my kin) is one which embraces all claims and times. Hence, to say that he took anything from Sanskrit is not to recognise the dimensions of his writing, the like of which had never been written anywhere.

The first book deals with aram or dharma in general, the second with polity and administration, and the last book with the theme of love.

#### ARAM:

The first chapter of the available book is an invocation to God. Here the writer does not refer to any particular god, but refers to Him only directly in involved terms. The directness, simplicity, elegance and force of the author's general style is wholly absent here and this had made critics say, correctly perhaps, that this chapter is an interpolation or later addition and not the author's writing.

Tamilnadu, from the beginning of time had the two ways of life, the householder's and ascetic's. Legends say that the author led the most happy householder's life. But Kural extolls both equally. It seems to preach only monogamy, which implies her lofty status for women. It does not ask her to worship her spouse, but everywhere, her importance (as the orthodox phrase grahalakshmi implies) is emphasized. What is important is not the householder's or ascetic's life itself, but the goals of life and the manner in which they are followed.

Gandhi's philosophy of life was contained in the two words: Non-violence and Truth. Kural enunciates the same two in a single verse, in the same order; "Non-killing (non-violence) is the supreme virtue: If you want a second one, follow truth (non falsehood) To Kural, as

to Gandhi, righteousness is not a mere end: it is the means also; it is life. The author lived during a period of hand to mouth existence, but yet, he unequivocally advocated non-receiving. The present age of reason has well been anticipated by him. He enjoins man to test everything by his reason whatever may be the subject, whoever may have said it. Rituals had been there in his day, but he transcends them all and pleads for a purity of the heart. Fate was then a much maligned term: he holds forth the hope that even fate can be beaten hollow by undaunted effort. Surely, the insistence on work and a confidence in its success is a gospel for all time. Kural lays great emphasis on education; not content with one chapter it devotes three chapters to this subject, besides one on eloquence.

#### PORUL:

The thoughts of Kural in the second book all deal with polity and administration. The author does not make any mention of any of the ruling dynasties in Tamilnadu. But we know that democracy was unknown in this days and the three crowned monarchs, ruled the land. Yet his dictum pronounced for the edification of kings holds good with equal force even in the days of a democratic republic. It is not arms that secure victory for the state: it is the just rule. Where the ruler demands money from the subjects, it is just highway robbery; how meaningful today, in the second half of the 20th century even on the very soil where the author wrote this dictum.

There should be the dread of punishment (for wrong doing) but even punishment should not be inflicted. The king should restrain his anger where he can expend it; certainly there is no point in restraining it where (as in the case of a superior power) it cannot be exerted. The chapters on time and place for the efforts of the king cannot be bettered. There is also an interesting chapter on state intelligence. The chapters on valour and heroism can stand comparison with similar Sangham poetry. There is also a chapter on what was once known as the fifth column activity and sabotage.

There is a chapter on medicine. Its thoughts hold good, even under the greatest advances today in medical science.

#### LOVE:

Then we pass on to the third book on love themes. The 25 chapters in this book have been distributed into the traditional two divisions, clandestine love and married love. Although the author tries to follow the concepts of love in the Sangham poetry, there is considerable departure from that tradition. Some of the verses are supreme love poetry, just penned down in four or five words: often a whole drama is enacted in these words. All the words are utterances of dramatic chapters and hence their suggestion and artistic appeal is all the greater. Similar emotional expression we do not find even in the Sangham poetry.

Kāmatuppāl, the third book, is sufficient to show that the author lived a most happy and felicitous domestic life.

It is remarkable that the author has written here a treatise on life in all its aspects, a charter for mankind which applies with equal force today, nearly twenty centuries after it was written; it bids fair to apply with the same force for many a century, till eternity. Its relevance is not only to Tamilnadu, not only to the Hindu fold, but to the whole world, speaking various languages and following different faiths. Though the charter was made by a man, it applies with equal force to women also. It lays bare the inmost recesses of the heart and that is the secret of its relevance. Born in a society ridden by caste, he speaks of a casteless classless society. Persons so distantly placed by language, climate and tradition as Gandhi, Tolstoy, Pope and Schweitzer, have hailed the Kural as a testament for mankind for all time.



## LESSON 6

## LITERARY HERITAGE—(contd.)

## (a) WORK OF ĀZVĀRS

The authors of the Vaiṣṇava canon are called Āzvārs, they who are deeply immersed in the grace and glory of Viṣṇu (and who will also help to immerse us in that ocean of grace). The Āzvārs are twelve in number and their period ranges from the 6th century to the 9th.

The songs of the Āzvārs are collected together and counted as a total of four thousand, and they are known by the name Nālāyira-Dīva Prabandham (the four thousand sacred songs). They are in four general subdivisions of about a thousand verses each. The larger song of Tirumaṅgai Āzvār and Nammāzvār are each over a thousand verses and so they have been grouped into two separate books, the second the Periya Tirumoṣi of Tirumaṅgai Āzvār and the fourth the Tirumoṣi of Nammāzvār. Of the other songs, the musical pieces are collected as the first volume, Mudal āvīram (the first thousand), and the non-musical pieces grouped as the third book called Iyal-pā.

We shall examine below, the songs of the Āzvārs, not in the order in which they are grouped in the Canon, but in an approved chronological order. Bhattar, Vedānta Dēśikan, Maṇavāla Māmuni and many others have arranged the authors differently, but we would follow here the order adapted by Tiru Araṅgattamudanār, the earliest of all, in the Ramanuja Nūrtantadi. Any discussion of dates is beyond the scope of our work.

## EARLY ĀZVĀRS:

The first Āzvārs (Mudal Āzvārs) were three - Poḥai, Bhūtam and Pēy, and all of them hailed from the Pallava country. There was Kalabha rule in the Pandiya country during the 3rd to the 6th centuries and no saint, Varuṭaya or Maṇava, hailed from the Pandiya country during that period. The first three Āzvārs sang their songs during this period (5-6 century). Poḥaiyār was born on a golden lotus in a cool tank in Kaṇṇi. Bhūtattār was born on a mādhava

flower (the hiptage creeper) in Kaḍal allai (Mahabalipuram); and Pēyār was born on a crimson lily in a well in Tiruvallikkēṇi (Madras); hence they are called ayōṇija (not born from a mother's womb).

A beautiful legend says how they met one dark night in the corridor of a house in Tiruk-Kōvalūr and how they saw a vision of Tirumāl (Viṣṇu) there and began to sing His praises. As there was not enough space for the three of them, they were standing; Viṣṇu entered amidst them, and they felt squeezed. Poḥai used the sun as a lamp and Bhūtam used devotion as a lamp to find out the cause of the squeezing. Pēyāzvār saw the Lord there and began to describe Viṣṇu whom they saw. They have each sung an antadi of 100 Venḇās, known as the first, second and third antādis. The mantra namō-nārāyaṇa finds place in a song of Poḥai; later it plays a very prominent part in the life and songs of Tirumaṅgai Āzvār. Poḥai mentions Tiruvēṅgaḍam frequently in his songs; Tiruvaraṅgam once; there is also a mention of Kōval iḍaikazi (corridor) in his songs (86). The other two Āzvārs mention many shrines in their songs, including several in Kāñci itself. Bhūtattār calls himself the great fortunate Tamizān (74), Bhūtam and Pēy mention Māmallai and Vinṇagar. Critics have remarked that as the shrines in these places were built in the 7th century, these Āzvārs should have belonged then or later. This is not correct. The shrines existed much earlier; narasimha and his successors built the monoliths; this does not mean that the temple also came later. Hence the references do not affect the antiquity of the Āzvārs.

These are the early poems in Vaiṣṇavism and they show a considerable degree of simplicity and religious tolerance, and a wonder and joy, born out of a full and limitless experience of divine grace.

## TIRUP-PANĀZVĀR:

Tirup-Pāṇāzvār, a bard of the lowest caste in society, was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu at Śrīraṅgam. He used to play his yāl instrument on the southern bank of the Kāvērī, in praise of the Lord, as a kind of service to Him. The Lord made known the devotion of the low caste Pāṇa by ordering the high caste priest to carry him into the temple on his shoulders. The Pāṇa has sung a short poem of ten verses in praise of the various organs of the physical form of the Lord of Śrī

## KULASEKHARA:

Next we take up Kulaśekhara, a Cēra prince of the west coast.

He calls himself the Lord of Kolli, Kūḍal (Madurai) and Kōzi (Uraiyur); this is mere vanity and does not signify much. Yet, the fact that he was a prince, was in those days very significant for the cause of Vaiṣṇavism; here he is the only princely poet in the Canon. The Pāṇḍiya prince had been of great help to Periyāzvār, but he was no poet. The prince of the Cēra dynasty was styled 'perumāl', irrespective of whether he was a Śaiva or a Vaiṣṇava; we find the Śaiva poet called Cēramān-perumāl in an earlier period. Here he is Kulaśekhara-perumāl and his songs are Perumāl Tirumoli.

His poems are ten, with 105 verses. He was most attracted by the Rāmāvatāra and most of his poems are a passionate adoration of this aspect of Viṣṇu. Like Periyāzvār, he is fond of celebrating the childhood of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and he has sung the first lullaby song in Tamiz.

The first three poems are in praise of Śrīraṅgam. Two poems are on the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa. In the first, the girls in the Āyarpādi chide him for being unfaithful to each in turn. The second is the very moving lament of Dēvakī, the real mother of Kṛṣṇa who becomes her own fate in not being able to rejoice in the boyish pranks and feats of the boy, while it was given to Yaśōdai to witness and rejoice in them. There is also another moving poem from the lips of Daśaratha, the father of Rāma, who mourns his ill luck in sending Rāma away to the forest. The next poem in praise of Tillai Tiruccittrakūṭam is a continuous narrative of the entire story of the Rāmāyaṇa.

All the poems of this āzvār prince are supremely lyrical in quality and his songs on Tiruvēṅkaṭam and Vittuvakkōḍu may be said to be unsurpassed in emotional fervour and supplication. He desired to be born as a bird, a fish, a cup, a tree, a rock, a stream, a step in fact anything on His Tiruvēṅkaṭam hill. Even if a mother pushed her child away, it can only cry for her affection and attention; so is the āzvār. The Vittuvakkōḍu song contains a proverb in each verse.

raṅgam. Mentioning each feature, the poet pours forth his longing for Him in the manner of a girl yearning for her lover. This one song has earned for him Āzvārhood.

## TIRUMAZISAI:

Tirumazisai Āzvār of the place of that name on the other hand, is a high caste brahmin and a bigot. He always heaps abuse on the Śaiva religion; nor does he spare Jainism or Buddhism. He has written two poems, an antādi of 100 veṅbas and Tiruchanda viruttam of 120 viruttam verses, set in a rigid rhythmic pattern. His works are philosophical in content but the lyrical quality is mostly absent. With him, the newly evolving Vaiṣṇava religion definitely slides into bigotry and intolerance.

Some of his verses contain great truths spoken in very simple lucid language in an arresting manner; but the general speed of the jingle and its mechanical rhythm wipe out all poetry from the songs; yet we shall see one verse: The tides build up even out of the snow white wide sea, they roll brack and merge with the same sea; in like manner, all that are born and that die, and wall and live, out of You, finally are merged in You: such is Your nature.

## TONDAR ADIPPODI:

Tondar adippodi (the dust of the feet of God's devotees) has two poems, one the Tiruppalliezzucci and the other Tiru Mālai. The first consists of ten verses, intended to rouse the Lord from His sleep in the early morning and obtain His grace. Tiru Mālai means the Holy Garland. The verses show a high degree of violent bigotry and intolerance, and at the same time of intense devotion also. According to his biography, his life consisted of extremes and they explain the extremes in his songs. He makes a complete surrender of himself to God and revels in the resulting joy. To him, the Kāvēri is more holy than the Ganges because Śrīraṅgam is on the Kāvēri. The appeal of the two poems to the Vaiṣṇavas is so great they are required to recite them daily in their prayer. My Lord of Śrīraṅgam, I have no place and no land; no kith nor kin. I hold fast unto Thy feet, Thou that art Supreme, of azure hue. I cry out to Thee, O Kṛṣṇa. Who is my support, other than Thee?

The Lament of Daśaratha after Rāma left the city for the forest as instructed by Kaikeyī is one of his best lyrical pieces. The poet really becomes the father and pours forth all the pangs of separation from the son; the nāyaka-nāyaki bhāva is frequent in devotional poetry. Periyāzvēr's role of mother to Kṛṣṇa in his songs is unique. But here Kulaśēkhara's role of father for Rāma is most unparalleled. For descriptive poetry in the most picturesque and lyrical language, Kulaśēkhara is a matter in the Vaiṣṇava canon. Probably he supplied many thoughts to Kambar for his epic composition.

#### PERIYĀZVĀR:

Next we go to Periyāzvēr. He was a brahmin from Śrī Villiputtur, named Viṣṇucittan. He was a spiritual preceptor to the Pāṇḍiya ruler, Śrī Vallabha. According to tradition, he established in the king's court that Viṣṇu was the Supreme and got the prize of a purse of gold. When Viṣṇu was taken in along the streets, he had a darśan of the deity and fearing that some one may cast an evil eye on Him, he sang a Pallāṇḍu poem, meaning—May you live long in all this glory. Usually it is the mother who does a ritual to remove the evil eye. Because he did this and because he sang almost all his songs on Kṛṣṇa, placing himself in the position of his mother Yaśōdā, he has been hailed by the grateful Vaiṣṇava community as the Periyāzvēr (the elder āzvēr). As also the foster father of Āṇḍāl, who gave her away in marriage to Viṣṇu, this title seems appropriate to him.

Each of the poems of an āzvēr is generally known as the song or Tirumozī (holy word) of that āzvēr. Periyāzvēr has sung 473 verses in 45 poems; they are the Periyāzvēr Tirumozī. The first poem is the Pallāṇḍu — the Nālayiram (the Vaiṣṇava canon) quite fittingly opens with the Pallāṇḍu.

Most of his songs are devoted to the Kṛṣṇāvatāra; there are also a few addressed to Rāma. His poems give us the most delightful picture of childhood in the Tamil language. Among all divine children, the child Kṛṣṇa has a very large number of lovely stories woven round him. This child and his pranks are the greatest favourites with the Āzvēr. Āzvēr was a bachelor; it is astonishing how

he has been able to enter into the mind of Yaśōdai and re-live the childhood days of Kṛṣṇa in Gōkulaṁ. The birth of the child, the beauty of his form, the child in the cradle, the address to the moon, the hisping of words, the clapping of hands — and many other little acts related to the child are subject matter of his poetry. All devotional literature teems with instances of the poet becoming mentally the lady-lover and pining for the love of the Lord. But Periyāzvēr really becoming the mother is the most unique feature in all literature.

His songs are some of the greatest poetry, not only in the Vaiṣṇava Canon but in all literature. As contributions to Tamil literature, his songs are the first in many respects. His is the first pallāṇḍu poem; his pillai-Tamiz motifs have helped the evolution of the poem as a type of literary composition in later years; his tālāṭṭu along with Kulaśēkhara's is the first lullaby, giving rise to a vast wealth of such literature in the next thousand years.

#### ĀṆḌĀL:

Āṇḍāl, the only woman poet among the Āzhvērs, is the adopted daughter of Periyāzhvēr. Āzhvēr found her as a baby in his flower garden, and the man who was a confirmed bachelor brought up this girl, as a mother would have. When she came of age, she refused to think of a mortal for a groom. She decked herself as Kṛṣṇa's bride. She even put on the garlands intended for him, to see if they were handsome enough to be worn by Him! This irked Āzvēr not a little, but Viṣṇu Himself approved of it. She chose Śrī Raṅganātha for her bridegroom and her life ends with the marriage and blissful union with her Lord at Śrīrangam.

Her songs, numbering in all 173 verses, form Tiruppāvai and Nācciyār Tirumozī. Tiruppāvai seems to have been taken from a popular theme of the period where girls go in groups to a river or tank for a bath and pray for the succour of their patron deity. Here Āṇḍāl calls upon her companions to wake up and go with her, singing the praise of the Lord Kṛṣṇa and seeking His grace on themselves in order to get good food, good cows and milk, good dress and good husbands, and ultimately asking Him to take all of them, of the āyār clan, as His servants for ever and ever. Tiruppāvai is a household

word in the Vaiṣṇava community recited by them daily, particularly in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. Pāvaip-pāṭṭu seems to have enjoyed immense popularity not only in Tamiznāḍu but in overseas territories also; it is said to be the occasion for a national festival during the days of the Goza conquests and got absorbed in popular lore.

We have heard critics remark that Āṇḍāl often lapses into indelicacy in expressing her longing for her divine lover. One who studies her poems deeply cannot agree with such a criticism. The words are uttered by Āṇḍāl assuming the role of a gōpi; it is certainly the ethereal and other-worldly longing of a love-sick damsel pining for the love of her lover. The theme is not wholly religious; it is partly religious and partly playful; Kṛṣṇa is not merely the Supreme Being, the Transcendental One, but also the Immanent One, who can be a playmate and comrade. She is a real gōpi; the role is not merely assumed. Many songs in Periyāzvār and one in Kulaśekhara are to be studied in the background of Kṛṣṇa's kṛidā. The words spoken in a dramatic situation and are placed in the lips of unlettered (and unsophisticated) āyar children. If we remember these three elements, namely, the immanence of Kṛṣṇa, the drama, and the children of the āyar clan, the poem can never appear to be sensuous or unwomanly.

Her other songs are equally valuable. Her Tirumozi opens with a worship of Mammatha the god of love, but the narration of her dream wedding with the Lord is the most important and the most lyrical of all her poems. The poem has got absorbed into the ritual of all the Vaiṣṇava communities; it is even today sung at their wedding ceremonies. This is a beautiful lyric, narrating the details of the marriage ceremony. All the parts of the function are so graphically described by her, that reading them, we even forget ourselves and imagine that we are actually in the midst of such a ceremony. The Vaiṣṇavas are really fortunate to have such a poem. We can go on choosing such poem and introducing them—her address to the conch, to the chank, flower and birds. Two of the songs are on the traditional dream model.

#### TIRUMAṆGAI AZVĀR

Tirumaṅgai Azvār is one of the two āyars who have sung a large number of verses and on a large number of themes. The Periyā

Tirumozi or the second thousand is composed entirely of his songs. Besides this, there are three important poems of his in the Iyal pā also. Generally a picturesque and dramatic setting is given to the lives of āzvārs and the story of Tirumaṅgai is certainly the most picturesque of them all. He was a kaḷḷar (robber clan) chief of Maṅgai in Tiruvāzināḍu, near modern Sirkāzi in Tañjāvur district. He married Kumuḍavallī and at her instance began feeding thousands of bhāgavatas daily. When he was short of funds, he took to highway robbery. To test him, Viṣṇu with his consort appeared on the road as a newly wedded bridegroom and bride. Unable to remove the rings on His toes, Maṅgai applied his teeth to them. When even this failed, he asked the bridegroom, "Have you cast a spell (mantra) over these?" He said, "yes," and whispered into Tirumaṅgai's ear the eight mystic syllables (aṣṭākṣara). Immediately the erstwhile robber came under the influence of the Lord and straightaway burst into song. The first song itself is very famous; it describes the learning of the Lord's name by the Āzvār and the conferment of all good thereby.

The total of his songs is 1,253 verses. He has toured the entire Tamiznāḍu. Quite contrary to tradition, his writings show considerable scholarship. His Tiru Ezhukkurirukkai like Sambandha's before him, has a very intricate number of arrangements which only a good scholar could have mastered. He has sung two maḍal poems, the smaller one and the larger one. The maḍal is a theme from the Saṅgham poetry; there it is the male who threatens to ride the maḍal, the palmyrah horse, out of a determination to give up his life through unrequited love; but here it is the woman, who is however strictly prohibited from doing so, according to the Saṅgham tradition.

His Periya Tirumozi contains besides Tirumozi, two beautiful poems, Tiruk-Kuruntāṇḍakam and Tiru Neduntāṇḍakam. The first, a short one of 20 verses, is modelled on Tiru Nērisai of Appar, with shorter lines and the second, a longer one of 30 verses, is modelled on Tiru Tāṇḍakam of Appar, with longer lines. The latter poem being longer, in each line has an easy flow of the subject; particularly in its verses 11-30 which are on the āham theme, the long-drawn sound effect, the subject and the music all together confer on the poem a quaint and sensitive touch.

But by far the greatest work is of course his *Tirumozi*. The opening song is the one he sang when he came directly under the influence of his Master, *Viṣṇu*; it is an outburst of ecstatic delight on being taught the Lord's name. The same delight in the name is expressed by him elsewhere also. One poem on *Tiruvēṇkaṭam* prays to the Lord fervently to accept him, in spite of his many imperfections (beginning "Tiyē taṇḍai enrum", 1028) is a very moving and haunting one. Like all the saintly singers everywhere, he says here that he has committed all sins; he cries that he is now surrendering himself to the feet of *Veṅkaṭeṣa* and prays to Him to receive him and bestow His grace. Another poem enumerates the occasions when He gave refuge to humble folk like *Guha* and prays that he also be accepted. Speaking of the *Tiru Nārāiṇūr* shrine, he says that this temple on a raised base was built by *Koc-ceṅgaṭ Cōza* who had already built twenty similar temples for *Śiva*. One poem here on *sappāni* (asking the infant child to clap his hands) is on the *Pillai-Tamiz* pattern of *Percayan*. Another poem of short lines, is in the form of an entreaty to a love-sick maiden to the birds and other animals to call on the Lord to arrive here. It is on the model of *Appar's Tiru Aṅgamālai* and is a delight to children; this is a poem on the love theme, most creative and poignant. There is also a *sāzal* poem, a song of game for gulls which might have been a model for *Māṇikkavācaka's* song of the same name; similar is also the *kōttumbi* poem. The refrains like *pongattam pongu* and *kuzmani dūram* are perhaps reminiscent of the folk songs of *Āzvār's* *kallar* clan; their significance has been forgotten.

Considering the poems as a whole, one cannot but be impressed by their literary achievement. There may not be great philosophical content in the songs, but their literary relish and their appeal as almost poems are immense. The appeal of childhood seems to be a favourite theme with all the *Varṇava* poets, because of the immense scope in the portrayal of the Lord as the lovely child *Kiṣṇa*; our *Āzvār* is no exception.

Almost all his verses seem to echo words, phrases, thoughts and patterns of the *Ṡaiva Nayanmars*.

From the *Āzvār's* allusions to the *Pallava* rulers of *Kāñci*, it has been established that he was a chief under *Dantivarṇa* (775-825 A.D.). He has sanctified twelve small shrines around *Tiru Nagari*, his place. He has also made many lavish endowments and added many structures to the *Srīraṅgam* temple. His name will always be associated with these two places.

#### NAMMĀZVĀR:

Lastly we go to *Nammāzvār*. The story of *Nammāzvār* is briefly told. He was the son of *Kāri* of *Tirukkuruḥūr* in the extreme south of *Tamiznāḍu*. Though he was born through the special grace of *Viṣṇu*, he kept dumb. His parents placed him under the *puli* tree (*tamarind*, the *sthala-vṛkṣa* of the temple at *Tirukkuruḥūr*). The child would not see anyone except Him, and would not speak with anyone. Sixteen years passed. *Madhurakavi* came there directed by a divine light, and to him the *Āzvār* opened his eyes and designed to speak. It is said that the forms of *Viṣṇu* enshrined in the various temples in *Tamilnadu* and beyond appeared before the *Āzvār* and he sang his songs on them.

He has sung four poems, *Tiru Viruttam*, *Tiru Āsiriyaṁ*, *Periya Tiru Antādi* and *Tiru Vāymozi*, giving out the substance of the four *vēdas* — *Rig*, *Yājus*, *Atharva* and *Sāma* respectively. His poems are known among the *Vaiṣṇavas* as the fifth *vēda*. His very name *Nammāzvār* shows the endearment he had among them (*Nam-āzvār* — our *āzvār*). He is the last of the *Āzvārs* and the first of the *ācāryas* (preceptors). *Nāthamuni* is said to have taken instruction directly under him, not personally but by revelation, and continued the spiritual line going on to *Ālavandār* and *Rāmānuja*.

The first three poems contain 100, 7 and 87 verses respectively. They are grouped under *Iyal pā*. But his reputation rests on the last, *Tiru Vāymozi* (sacred utterances), which runs to 1,102 verses. All the verses are in one *antādi* arrangement; the legend that all the forms of *Viṣṇu* in the various temples appeared before him to receive a song from him is understandable from the fact of this *antādi* arrangement.

*Vāymozi* is said to contain the essence of the philosophy of *Varṇavān*, and that is said to be its greatness. It is the one basic



scripture for Vaiṣṇavism, much more than the vēdas. Later preceptors and writers have extracted all the metaphysical and philosophical concepts from this book. The Vaiṣṇavas derive great satisfaction in giving it a Sanskrit name such as the Drāvidōpaniṣad, Drāvida vēda saṅgaram and Drāvida brahma gīta.

His Tiru-viruttam deals with love themes on the model of the earlier Saṅgham aham poetry on the religious plane. It sings of the soul's determination to break the fetters which bind it to matter, and expresses its yearning for union with God.

This Āzvār's poetry enshrines the highest spiritual wisdom of the Vaiṣṇava cult and in this respect he occupies the same exalted position that Māṇikkavācaka occupies in Śaivism. As poetry, the Tiruvāymozi is considered to be "heart melting poetry, giving us the quintessence of divine experience". His is not mere wisdom: it is a blend of wisdom, emotion, surrender and realisation. He has the god vision in an extraordinary measure. All his senses perceive only God: it is always a direct realisation through absolute surrender. He often expresses this realisation in emotion charged love lyrics. He addresses the world and gives out his message of love and hope; of surrender and joy in service. Attunement to the divine will liberates one even here, in this birth.

Many of his songs on the love theme are supremely poetic. There are indeed inspired poetic writing and brilliant flashes when he lays bare the inmost recesses of the heart pining for the love of the Lord. Art thou not mine own, little myna? I had prayed to thee to convey my all-consuming love to God, but thou didst not. I have now become weak and helpless through pining after him. Thou mayst go even now, and find someone who can feed thee as lovingly as I had done (so that I may pass away without any anxiety for thy future welfare). What a poignant and intimate affection even towards a pet, born out of the intense love for God.

Poetic tradition in the Tamiz language has been of a very high standard. There have been many Āzvārs whose poems had conformed to these standards. Many of the poems of this Āzvār also, following the love theme, hail in that tradition as great poetry. If

tradition regarding his early life is to be credited, one cannot but marvel at the life-experience and love-experience which find expression in his songs. When one attains a spiritual oneness with the All-pervasive Being, an awareness of all experience — spiritual, physical or emotional — accrues.

#### MADHURAKAVI:

Madhurakavi, the last of the Āzhvārs, is remembered as the devotee who discovered Nammāzvār. It is remarkable that he has been raised to Āzvār-hood, though he has not sung a single line on Viṣṇu; his ten verses are on his master, Nammāzvār; he even says that he knows no other god than Nammāzvār. Yet such has been the discerning devotion of the Vaiṣṇavas that his short poem forms part of their daily prayer book.

#### AMUTANĀR:

Amutanār, in the days of Rāmānuja, sang an antādi poem of 108 verses in praise of Rāmānuja. Its poetic and philosophic content was of such a high quality that the Ācārya included it, at the request of the Vaiṣṇavas, in the Vaiṣṇava canon, to bring up the total number of verses in the canon to four thousand verses. The antādi contains a number of verses of good lyrical quality. Its importance also lies in the fact that by its arrangement of the list of āzvārs, it sheds some light on their chronology also.

Periya Āccān Pillai has written commentaries on the entire Nālāyiram. Tiruvāymozi of Nammāzvār has been elaborated in the five commentaries known as the 6, 9, 12, 24 and 36 āyirappādi by different authors in different periods; the last is also known as the 'Idu'; the 24 is by Pillai. Vēdānta Dēṣikar, founder of the Vada-kalai sect, has written a commentary on the short work of Tirup-pānāzvār. Others have also written additional commentaries on some other works.

#### (b) WORKS OF NĀYANMĀRS

The suppression of the alien Kalabhras clan by Pāṇḍiyan Kadumkon by the end of the 6th century had helped a revival of

the ancient orthodox religions of the land. Great spiritual preceptors both in Śaivism and in Vaiṣṇavism toured the entire Tamil country, sanctifying the temples by their songs, and directing people, the masses and the elite, towards a higher and godly way of life. In the Śaiva fold, such preceptors are said to be four and they have had the most powerful hold in the minds of the people from that day to this, during a period of about thirteen centuries, and the hold shows every tendency to become stronger with the passing of the years. The movement set afoot by the preceptors has come to be called the bhakti movement, one of absolute selfless unquestioning surrender to God. This surrender we find has enriched the people's lives, enriched art and letters, and enriched the dimensions of life itself by ushering in an era of universal brotherhood in the name of God. The songs of the saints of this bhakti movement form the Śaiva canon; it is called the *Tirumurai* (sacred canon).

#### JNANA SAMBANDHA

Tirujñāna Sambandha, the first writer in the Śaiva canon, has sung 1153 verses, in 384 decads, all of them set to music. He was born in the first half of the 7th century at Śirkāzi in the Cōzanāḍu. When he was three, he had a visitation of Divine Grace and from then on he was a divine child. He toured the Tamiz country unceasingly, singing the praise of Śiva in hundreds of Śiva shrines, from Ramesvaram in the extreme south to the northern limits of Tamiznāḍu. Tamil legends say that many miracles were performed by him. The greatest of his exploits was the vanquishing of the Jains at Madurai in philosophic disputation and the re-conversion of the Pāṇḍiyan ruler back to the Śaiva fold. This meant that Jainism in Tamiznāḍu was given a death blow; it never could raise up its head thereafter as a political or social force. Sambandha, as the champion of music, had always launched powerful attacks on the Jains in his songs; they were in his opinion opposed to Tamil culture, its language, music and religion.

Among the hymn singers, he was the greatest beyond doubt. He attained beatitude at the young age of sixteen; but the volume of his writing now available is indeed quite large; his is the largest contribution in the Śaiva canon. The greatest contribution of Sambandha

to Tamiz literature is in the field of music. Though music formed the second division of Tamiz, it had been ruthlessly suppressed by the austerity of Jainism in the three centuries, 3 to 6 A.D. It is to the lasting glory of Sambandha that he actually resurrected Tamizh music and placed it on the high pedestal due to it, single-handed. He calls himself in many of his poems Sambandha, master of Tamiz and of Music. Other hymnists in Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism had no doubt sung musical pieces, but no one called himself a master and champion of music or gave such importance to music in his songs, and no one has been acclaimed in later literature and legend as a great exponent of music. Sambandha carried in his hands a pair of cymbals given to him by Śiva for marking time while singing. He was accompanied in his hours of the shrines by Nilakaṇṭha Yāzhppāṇa and his wife, who accompanied him on their Yāz (lyre). The variety of musical as well as literary compositions sung by them are unequalled by any other. He had invented many new forms of prosody and metre; the varieties of difficult verses (*Citrakkavi*) employed by him had never been attempted by any other poet or hymnist.

The song of Jñāna Sambandha give us the feeling that though the vēdas were considered the supreme scriptures, the concept of Āryan and non-Āryan or Tamizan did not exist in his day. He always refers to himself as the Tamiz expert, the master of Tamiz, and never once as the Āryan; evidently he considered all the brahmins of his day only as Tamizans and never cared or bothered to call them anything else. People of a later day may call him an Āryan; but he never spoke of himself in that manner. Besides, Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi of the early 11th century calls him only Tamilākaran, the fountain of all Tamiz, and never as Āryan. In the years after Saṅkara, caste prejudices developed and cleavage between Sanskrit studies and Tamil scholarship widened. The smārtas, who generally hail Saṅkara as their ācarya, have never claimed Sambandha, though a brahmin, as their own; it is only the Śaivas who claim him, as their ācarya; this was because in the later-day society, a brahmin had come to mean Sanskrit, while a Śaiva meant only Tamiz.

The position is somewhat different with Appar. He mentions the Āryan in several places (1246, 2321, 2325, 2552, 2946) in his songs.

He says that Śiva is both Aryan and Tamiz. He is Sanskrit and Tamil. He is the Aryan and the Tamizan. The omission of Aryan by Sambandha and the repetition of the term by Appar is significant. Sambandha being a brahmin, does not very much care about his being a brahmin but always lays great emphasis on his Tamizan nationality. Appar not being a brahmin, goes on emphasising the concept of unity that God is both the Aryan and the Tamizan.

Sambandha has also sung many lyrical poems on the *aham madal*, placing himself in the position of a maiden pining for the love of the Lord. Many of such verses are supremely lyrical. Among all the singers of the Śaiva canon, Sambandha is the one who had worked the largest number of miracles. All of them were performed not for his own sake, but for the benefit of the suffering society at large, for individuals and for communities, and viewed in this light, the keynote of the miracles may be said to be service to humanity. The life of Sambandha thus exemplifies the truth that real service to fellow beings is also real service to God.

Sambandha has sung on the largest number of shrines; he has also sung the largest number of musical tunes. He has also referred in his songs to a large number of purāṇic stories. He rules that we shall not try to fathom the mystery of the conferment of His Grace with our limited language and our limited reasoning faculty. It is unfathomable; those who desire to get over the ills of life should have faith in HIM.

Sambandha was young in years; this element is discernible in all his poetry and action. The variety of difficult verses composed by him testify to his youthful vigour. A child is impulsive and we find him always seeking divine intervention for the relief of suffering and the grant of succour to mankind. The gifts which he received from Lord Śiva were not asked for; his prayers were all only for the welfare of society. His tender age is also discernible in his description of nature. No other poet in the Śaiva hymns has described luxuriant nature so vividly, so profusely and intimately, and so often as he; he sings in detail of rivers and clouds, of animals and birds and trees and plants, all pointing to a sublimation in the love of God.

It is well known that Sambandha carried on a relentless tirade against the Jains and the Buddhists. But yet, believing in the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of Śiva, he could not help singing that Śiva directed the Jain and the Sākkiya cults also and that even their untrue words are His own sport.

#### APPAR:

Saint Appar, senior contemporary of Sambandha, lived to a ripe old age. He has sung 3,066 verses. Born a Śaiva, he went over to Jainism, but at the prayers of his sister, Lord Śiva intervened and brought him back into the Śaiva fold. He survived the persecution of the Jains and by his godliness and devotion also won over the Pallava ruler back to the Śaiva fold. He toured the entire Tamiznāḍu, like Sambandha, not only singing the praises of Śiva, but also doing everywhere manual labour in the temple, in cleaning the temple premises. A new dignity and dimension have been bestowed on physical labour and the sense of outward cleanliness, by the life and service of Appar. His songs are always on a higher ethical plane. He has sung a few songs set to music (*paṇ*) but most of his writing is not set to the *paṇ* type of music. He is famous as the master of *ṭandakam*, a form of verse with eight feet to the line, capable of expressing mellowed thoughts in a lingering metre. His language is always simple, direct and easily understandable, without any artistic or laboured flourishes. The feeling of devotion and surrender expressed in his poems is always direct and simple and of course profoundly genuine. His *Tiru Angamālai* is being sung by all children; it is a short poem in which he dedicated every organ of his body to the service of God. Divine intervention in his life came comparatively late and he was quite experienced in life at the period. Hence his language and thought express this richness of experience and maturity of wisdom, which is rare among younger people. He met and befriended Sambandha and the two visited many shrines together. He was called Appar (the father) by his younger contemporary Sambandha, because of his age and his deep devotion, and this became the name by which he was generally known thereafter.

His first book consists of three parts — the part in *paṇ*, 21 poems, the *Tiru-nērisai* 58 poems, and *Tiru-viṛuttam* 34 poems. Of these,

the second part is the largest. Each poem here used to be sung by the canon singers (known as *ōḍuvārs*) in the tune of the *Sāmaveda*; even vedic singers used to listen to their recital.

The second book of his songs is known as the *Tiruk-kuṇṭṭohai*. It contains 1,015 verses and they are the quintessence of his teachings. Here we see the full realisation of a spiritual experience and the joy resulting therefrom. Along with all the great spiritual thinkers, Appar also believes that God-realisation can result only through His Grace. It is very remarkable that his devotion had universal acclaim in his own day. Appudī, a brahmin of distant *Tingalūr* had made many public benefactions in his name, even without seeing him. Appar generally made no prayer for divine intervention by miracles; a solitary exception is the bringing back to life of Appudī's son.

His third book is the *Tirut-tāṇḍakam*; Appar is himself is known as the Prince of *Tāṇḍakam*; *Tirumaṅgai Āzvār* on a later day composed a poem of 30 verses on his model. The *tāṇḍakam* is a long-drawn verse with eight feet to the line. Here we find sincere and genuine feeling, charged with the deepest emotion. Repetition of course could not be avoided, and in an age when people had all eternity at their disposal, the singing of the *tāṇḍakam* exercised such a spell over the masses which was deep, soulful and unequalled. It left a feeling of solace and peace which no other hymn did. The very repetition evokes tears of joy and of contrition and repentance, even in the twentieth century.

The songs of Appar, *Tiru Nāvukkarasu*, the Prince of Words, are a passionate prayer for the conquering of the senses and a complete surrender to God as the requisite state therefor. Where others say that the births should be ended, he says that the birth should be welcomed, because it enables us to see the dance of *Natarāja* and experience the supreme joy it confers. Appar, the reformed *Śaiva*, challenged the authority of the Pallava emperor to summon him, and so things of the world mean nothing to him. He spurned the pleasures of life and preached a unique freedom of the soul and his songs are a clarion call of this freedom. This spirit has enabled him to see God in everything. Caste and class are nothing; he is prepared to worship even an outcaste and a leper if God dwells in his heart.

He never laments that God deserted him; he is sure of God's succour and grace; in that blissful assurance, he says his duty is only to do His service without caring for any return. It is this spirit which had made Milton centuries later to say, "they also serve who only stand and wait". Some are fond of calling Appar a mystic, but there is no obscure or unfathomable mysticism in his sayings. All his outpourings come straight from the heart and any ardent and gifted devotee can indeed feel the same. Many of his sayings become proverbial, expressing in crisp and telling language the wisdom of the ages.

## SUNDARA

Saint Sundara is the third *ācārya* of the *Śaiva* canon. He has sung just 1,026 verses. Probably he lived one generation after Appar. A marriage fixed for him by his parents was stopped by divine intervention. Later *Śiva* is said to have helped him to marry twice. He had promised his second wife never to leave her, but when he is moved by the thought of the temple celebrations in the place of his first wife, in the month of *Paṅguni* (March-April) he leaves the second wife. Immediately he loses the power of sight. He realises that this is a punishment. But his prayers to the Lord are of no immediate avail; he has to suffer; his eyesight is restored to him only after some time. Sundara is called the comrade of *śiva*, but that has not helped him to take liberties in the matter of wordly ethics.

Although Sundara is a *Śaiva ācārya* coming immediately after *Sambandha* and Appar, his whole life is cast in an altogether different mould. Miracles also happen through him, but most of them relate to his own life; they were worked by *Śiva* to provide comforts to him in life; the bringing back to life of a child from a crocodile in *Avināsi* is the only exception. In this respect, he is vastly different from the two earlier *ācāryas*. In the case of *Sambandha*, miracles happened to help members of the society and to relieve their suffering; no miracle was asked for by him for his own sake. In the case of Appar, miracles did no doubt happen. His bringing back to life the son of Appudī is certainly intervention by a miracle. But in all the other instances, *Śiva* worked miracles to relieve the sufferings of Appar himself and to help him spiritually. He even afflicted a due colic on him to reclaim him into the *Śaiva* fold.

Sundara however stands on a different category altogether. Except the one instance where he loses his power of sight, which is in the nature of a punishment, all the other instances are for providing comforts to him in the worldly life. In this sense, we may believe that his story is much more on the human plane than those of the other two, which are altogether on different planes.

Three episodes in the life of Sundara deserve special mention. One is the role of messenger of love which Śiva acted at Tiru Ārūr for him. When Sundara returned from Tiru Orriyūr to Paravai his first wife, she had heard of his second marriage at Orriyūr and so refused to see him. So, in order to appease her and make her receive Sundara, Śiva had to go to her on his behalf several times at dead of night. The second is the story of another devotee Kalikkāma who was angry with Sundara for having dared to use Lord Śiva as a messenger of love. Śiva had to intervene here through a miracle to appease him and make him be friend Sundara. The last is the story of Cēramān, which gets interwoven into Sundara's life towards the end. Cēramān, a prince of the Cēra country, himself a devotee, whose songs are included in the Eleventh Canon, takes Sundara to his own city, from where both attain final beatitude.

Sundara's greatest contribution is to the Śaiva hagiology where, in a sweet little poem, he says that he is the servant of the servants of God and enumerates a list of sixty such men and women of God, and nine groups of the devotees of God. This song of his was the inspiration, four centuries later, to Sēkkizhār in his writing of the Periyapurāṇam.

Coming immediately after Appar and Sambandha, Sundara frequently refers to them in his songs; he mentions in particular that Sambandha caused an understanding of God and Tamiz through his music. Following in that tradition, his own songs, all set to music, are also simple and sweet. Occasionally there is a pleasant description of nature and a luscious enjoyment of life in his poems; but his mind transcends that plane. In one place, he asks poets to go no more singing the praise of men for material benefits, but to praise the Lord and the Lord only. Some of his most moving songs are those sung when he lost his eye-sight; the affliction there was physical and quite real; his lament is indeed heart-rending.

The songs of these three saints is called the Tēvāram and it forms the first seven books of the Śaiva canon. Saint Umāpati says that Sambandha sang 16 thousand paḍikams, Appar 49 thousand, and Sundarar 38 thousand — making a total of 103 thousand paḍikams or decads; this means that the verses in their songs would have been well over a million. But tradition also mourns that the major part had been eaten away in palm leaf by termites and we are left with only 8,250 verses.

### MĀNIKKĀ-VĀCAKA:

We now pass on to Saint Māṇikkavācaka, who lived probably a hundred years after Sundara. He is the well known author of Tiruvācakam, a collection of 656 devotional verses. This book, like Kural, is familiar in translation to discerning people in English and many other languages besides. The story of Māṇikkavācaka is very well known. He was born at Tiruvādvair in the Pāṇḍiya country and his profound learning secured recognition by being appointed minister to king. While on the way to purchase horses for the king, he met the divine guru at Perunturai and from that moment, having had supreme spiritual enlightenment in His presence, he became His slave and forgot his duty to the king his master. For this neglect of duty, he had to undergo punishment at the hands of the king. He supplicates himself to his Master; many miracles happen; the king realises the state of mind of Māṇikkavācaka and releases him from his service. The saint thereupon goes to Cidambaram visiting several shrines on the way, dictates all his songs to the Lord Himself who acts as his scribe there, and there attains mukṭi.

The whole of Tiruvācakam is sheet poetry, of a very high order; to use the author's own words, it is bone-melting poetry. The book contains 51 separate poems, of which 13 represent folk song motifs. The story says that he went about mixing with the common people and children and absorbed the plays and games of the girls into his poems to express his feelings of surrender and devotion to God. Many of these motifs had never before been put to this kind of poetic use. The other saints sang decads of song in temples and in the congregations. They were planned to be so sung. Not so the songs of Māṇikkavācaka. They were not generally sung in the shrines in his

time. Except at Tirupperunturai, Uttarakōsamaṅgai, Tirukkazukunram and Cidambaram, where he was vouchsafed a vision of the guru, the saint did not sing at the shrines ; hence probably the legend that Natarāja Himself came to him at Cidambaram and wrote out all the songs to his dictation, as otherwise there was no means of gathering the songs. His relationship with God is personal ; his songs are just his offerings of his own soul at the feet of his master and guru, Lord Śiva. In add his poems, he praises the glory of Śiva, who had deigned to bestow His infinite grace on himself, humble and undeserving though he was. This element is present in all his songs.

It is not as though Māṇikkavācaka was always in a state of ecstasy, a permanent stage reached from an experience of God's grace. Far from it. Like every mortal, he had his periods of darkness and pangs of separation too, and these are easily perceivable in the poems. The Uttarakōsamaṅgai part of his story bears witness to this element. He had a full realisation of God and an ecstatic spiritual joy ; it passed off and a period of unhappiness and despair set in ; he cried to God and cried out in agony, and again he had a vision and an experience. This process seemed to go on alternately until he got the final realisation in Cidambaram. All these changes in experience are clearly echoed in the songs. Hence the song content is entirely and intimately personal. The folksong motifs echo this personal relationship and as a rule they all represent periods of joy and supplication. There is also in Tiruvācakam a strain of strong conviction that he could not be shaken off. In such places, the poems portray the complete trust and assurance of a little child in its mother.

Words have no use for him. He first sings as the experience gushes forth vocally. He does not very much think of music or of imagery. There are some verses in Tiruvācakam where the metre does not appear to be perfect ; but it is not as though he does not know prosody ; such passages only portray his inward struggle. He also employs the love theme or aham, but even here, that note is subordinated to that of praise of the Lord.

It is doubtful if Tirukkōvai is his composition and so it is not dealt with here.

The songs sung by these four saints are quite large for one volume. In the days of Emperor Rājārāja Cōzha, Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi had collected the songs and grouped them into different books. The songs of Sambandha formed the first three books of the Śaiva Canon ; those of Appar the books 4, 5 and 6 ; those of Sundara the book 7 ; Tiruvācakam of Māṇikkavācaka formed book 8. Other books were also added on by Nambi. These first eight books in particular had been shaping the thoughts, actions and aspirations, and regulating the life and culture of the Śaiva community for more than a thousand years.

From the Saṅgam period to the period of Sambandha and Appar is a long jump ; there had been a gap of more than four centuries. This period has been rightly called by historians as the dark age because all Tamil culture, art and letters and religion had been suppressed by the Kalabhra raiders who held sway in Madurai from about 250 to 575 A.D. There was religion and worship in the earlier period, but the continuity was broken. Only a few religious writers were there in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Canon even during this period, but they were all in the north in the Pallava and the Cōza territories, outside the Pāṇḍiya country. Aided by the efforts of such writers, both the religions took on the new life by the middle of the 7th century. Where there is repression, there is greater effort and dedication. The Kalabhra repression was partly responsible for the sudden outburst of religious writings in the seventh century. Temple worship which was dormant in the Pāṇḍiya country was started vigorously now. And with the tours of the two Nāyanmārs, a fresh wave of bhakti, selfless unquestioning surrender to the Supreme God, swept the entire land. The songs of these saints are no doubt poetry of a high order, having intrinsic aesthetic beauty and sweetness, but were also powerful motive forces in life, urging people to religious action. Whatever might have been the position of Sanskrit earlier, these simple songs in elegant musical Tamil won over all the people high and low, including the Sanskritists, because they moved the hearts of the Tamil people in a manner never before known. The culmination of this change of heart was attained two centuries later, when the Cōza Empire began to materialise on the banks of the Kaveri, and a new

golden era of political supremacy which was synonymous with religious culture and temple building was ushered in.

The ninth book is known as Tiru Isaiippa. It is a very short book containing 29 poems in 301 verses by nine authors. All the poems are musical pieces and hence the name Isaiippa. The book, though very short, is remarkable in many ways. More than half the number of poems are on Natarāja of Cidambaran. It has the only pallandu poem in the Śaiva Canon. Gaṇḍarāditta, who was a Crowned King monarch between 950 and 957, has sung a poem on Natarāja, included here. The book includes four poems by Senḍanar, a harījan. All the poems are set to music and the paṭi is noted for each poem. A paṭi named sarpapāṭi, not found in the Tevāram is found here. The Tevāram songs are all on Śiva and are not in praise of any other deity. Here, Senḍanar has sung a poem on Mūruḡa. The songs had great popularity in the Coza period. Most of them may be considered to have been composed at the inducement of Gaṇḍarāditta and his queen Sembiyan Mādevi. Karuvur Deva, who enjoyed the patronage of Rājaraḡa I and his son Rājendra, has sung more than a third of this volume.

Tiru Isaiippa is also poetry, one voicing soulful surrender to the One Supreme, but because of the greater brilliance of Tevāram and Tiruvacakam it pales into a second rank.

#### TIRUMŪLAR:

During the Kalabhra interregnum there were religious poems in both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. Tirumūlar and Kāraikkāl Ammayār belong to the period. Tirumūlar on the banks of the Kāvēri wrote his Tiru Mantiram of 3,000 short verses, which have been grouped by Nambi as the tenth book. The name of the book itself is significant; it is a mantra, mystic utterance. Tirumūlar is considered to be the first of the Siddha (realised soul) poets. His writing warrants this belief. Written in a simple and telling language, the verses employ a good amount of spoken Tamil as well as a greater admixture of Sanskrit. This does not imply that he was later in point of time. He has a directness and forcefulness born out of the harmony of complete realisation, and a contempt for those engrossed with worldly

matters. The very directness makes his writing the highest poetic expression of the most sublime philosophy. He re-stated the gospel that Love is God, just as fifteen centuries later, Gandhi said 'Truth is God.' He emphasized the truth that God is one and mankind is one. Tirumūlar did not believe in the mortification of the body in the mistaken belief that it is a hindrance to the salvation of the soul. He declared emphatically that God did dwell in the body and so the body is to be nourished as an instrument for the attainment of higher knowledge and of salvation. He has laid down a simple code of ethical conduct which can be followed by the lowest and the highest. Offer a bit of a leaf (in the place of flower) to God, a handful of grass to the low, a morsel of food to the needy when you take your food, and say a kind word to everyone. A point to be noted about Tirumantiram is that among the twelve books of the Śaiva Canon, it is the only śāstra or scripture, i.e., a book devoted to philosophy; the others are all devotional songs. The place of Tirumūlar in Tamil literary history is unique. He is a mystic and lays bare his spiritual experiences in all his verses. He gives out the experience both in a classical language and in the language of the masses; the ecstatic outpourings of a siddha are also there in his work. These three elements perhaps tend to make his poetry uneven and a little obscure in places although the overwhelming ecstasy of experience and the flash of brilliance are always present. Tirumūlar is a canonised saint.

#### THE ELEVENTH BOOK:

Nambi gathered all the other devotional songs which were sung before him and grouped them as the 11th book along with his own poems. The songs of Kāraikkāl Ammai have been collected into this book. She has written two musical pieces and two other poems besides. Ammai might have lived in the 4-5 centuries, probably as a contemporary of Tirumūlar. The Paḍikams of Ammai are musical pieces, where she describes in vivid detail the dance of Natrāja in the cremation ground along with the ghosts which inhabit the place. But her other two poems are beautiful lyrics. They express the innocent joy and wonder of a child on seeing the form of Śiva, decked with the serpents, the crescent moon and the Ganges. She also expresses the highest truths of philosophy: 'It is He that perceives, that makes



me perceive, and is the instrument of perception, and also the object perceived'.

Many other poems, by familiar and unfamiliar authors, go into the book. We have here three poems by Cēramān Perumāḷ, contemporary of Saint Sundara: Tīru-Murugārūppadai of Nakkīrār, a piece of Saṅgham poetry; a few verses by Āiyāḍigaḷ Kadavūr Kōn, a Pallava chief, who lived before Sundara; and five poems by Pattinattār, besides ten poems of Nambi himself. These poems were apparently strung together, so that all devotional literature written upto that period might be available to the Śaivas and might not be lost.

The 11th book of the Śaiva Canon is important in another way. It has introduced many new forms of poetic composition. The Irattai-maṇimālai, Munṇaṇikkōvai, Uḷā, Oṟupā Oṟupaṭu and Nānmaṇimālai occur for the first time in Tamil literary history only in this collection; these types of poems had not existed before. Another feature is the inclusion of Tīrumurugārūppadai (as pointed out) and of the second verse of Kuṟuṇṭhai as the first poem here as an epistle from Śiva Himself; these two are Saṅgham poems.

#### PERIYAPURĀṆAM:

The 12th book of the Śaiva canon is Periyapurāṇam, the lives of godly men. This work holds a unique position in the language in that it is a work of epic proportions on the glory of the servants of God. It is quite a large work, running to 4,286 quatrains, in the vuttam metre. The language is always easy, graceful, fluent and charged with emotion. The one keynote of this work is bhakti, devotion to God, and viewed from that standpoint, it is a marvellous achievement.

The author Cēkkizār, who was also the king's minister, wrote this at the request of his king Kulōttunga II. with the avowed goal of weaning him away from a study of the Jain work, Cintāmaṇi. The work is in a sense a national epic of the Tamil people, because it treats of the lives of the saints who lived in all the different parts of the Tamiznaḍu and belonged to all the classes of society, men and women, high and low, educated and unlettered; we have among the saints princes from the ruling dynasties of the land, as well as men from

the harijan classes; but they are all equal in the devotion and service to God and godly men. Cēkkizār transcends the limits of time space and comprises within the fold of his spiritual democracy even people who lived earlier and who will be living later, in all the distant climes. Most of the saints have to pass through an ordeal where their devotion is put to the severest test, but every one of them emerges out of it victorious. Nothing is impossible for the devotee; sacrifices of all earthly possessions is nothing. He sacrifices his wife, his child, himself, his eyes; he plucks out; fights with his own kith and kin; he does not hesitate to punish the king's wife when she smells the flowers intended for God. Devotion to God's emblems is so intense that when he sees the sacred ash on his adversary in combat, he allows himself to be slain rather than fight with a devotee. When a Cōza prince found the matted head (the emblem of Śiva of a soldier on the battlefield he gives up his own life for the sin of having caused the death of such a soldier. Ordinary persons become great heroes by their simple sacrifices; women also share such sacrifices as equal partners. Including the three Tēvāram singers, the Purāṇam mentions the lives of seven poets who are also servants of God.

Written by a minister of the Cōza state when Cōza supremacy was at its highest, the poem is not only one of intense devotion, but also one of great majesty and real grandeur, the like of which we rarely meet with in all the wide range of Tamil epic poetry.

A deep and fervent humanism pervades all the songs of the saints and is also very well brought out in the lives of the saints sung by Cēkkizār. Here we may say that the saints care also for humanity at large and strive to ameliorate its suffering. We may even say further that they evince a transcendent humanism, which goes out to the service of not only mankind, but also the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. The words of Tīrumūlar quoted earlier will well illustrate this. The saints saw God in all creatures and they seem to have considered service to all creatures as service to God.

#### THE SIDDHAS

There is quite a decent volume of Siddha literature in the Tamil language and it will therefore be worthwhile to know the Siddha poets

and their writing. The word Siddha means a realised soul. Though Tirumūlar is known as a Siddha, his songs have been collected into the Śaiva canon and so we are not discussing him here. The poems of the other Siddhas are said to have been collected into a handy volume known as the 18 Siddhar Jñāna Kōvai, but the volume is not real Siddha poetry. There are in it large sections of modern writing in prose and verse which will hardly fit in with the Siddha writing. We shall therefore be content here with examining the writings of a few well-known Siddhas.

#### ŚIVAVĀKKIYĀR:

The first name to occur to the mind of any one is Śivavākkiyār. He was a deeply religious Siddha who valued most the Śiva enshrined in the heart. He was generally considered to be an iconoclast because he vehemently decried temple worship; he did so no doubt; but he said still more vehemently that man should make his heart the temple of God. He had scant respect for rituals which in popular belief had become a substitute for love and service to God and to fellow beings. He was a vehement opponent of caste. Almost all the Siddhas believed in the oneness of all creation and they preached a philosophy of love and service and of an inward contemplation; Śivavākkiyār is a shining example of this faith. Some of his verses have the force of a sabre thrust.

#### PATTINATTĀR AND AVVAI:

Pattinattār the Siddha lived probably about the same time as Śivavākkiyār and he too condemned material pleasures as the greatest obstacle to spiritual advancement. Śivavākkiyār had no word to say against woman, but this Pattinattār always carried on a tirade against them. His one message was compassion, sharing one's food with the hungry.

It was Pattinattār who brought the highest spiritual wisdom and its emotional flight in both polished and rugged poetry to the level of the so-called masses. Till recently, there was no mendicant, beggar or wandering minstrel who did not sing a dozen of his verses to the accompaniment of an one-stringed self-made harp. The content of the song, the attunement of the minstrel, and his rugged harp banded, strangely enough, harmoniously with the rural setting

Pattiragiri, according to legend, renounced a princely life on seeing the value of Pattinattār's renunciation and became his disciple. He has written the Pulambal or Lamentations, containing 235 couplets, expressing his passionate longing for the realisation of God and for deliverance from sins. He always expressed his love for fellow-beings and reverence for womanhood. Avvai in Tamiz literature has been many, and here we consider the Avvai, who sang Jñānakkural and Vināyakar Ahaval. Her two poems are very popular and although she is not spoken of as a Siddha, she is indeed one, both by her life and by her songs.

#### OTHERS:

There have been a few more minor Siddhas who have sung a few moving poems each, though couched in obscure and mystic language. The name of Pāmbāṭṭi Siddha, the snake charmer, is the foremost among them. His song, Āḍu pāmbē, is famous in the whole of Tamiz-nāḍu today. He is a mystic and all his thoughts are couched in mystic language. The kuṇḍalini śakti is the serpent which he would like to charm and cause to pay. Azunguṇi Siddha is another, who had only a few verses to his credit. The tone of his songs is one of lament and hence his name Azunguṇi, the mourner. He addresses his songs to Kāṇṇamma, and perhaps this inspired Bhārati, the modern national poet of Tamiznāḍu, to compose his famous Kāṇṇammā songs. A happēy is another; the mind is the devil (pēy) and he addresses his songs to that mind. The mind roams about without any fixed purpose, skipping from one thing to another. His songs are intended to fix it in the Śaiva spiritual path. Kaduvēli is yet another; he is the author of the type of verse now known as amandak-kalippu. He condemns all malpractices in the Siddha order and laments that people do not put to proper use the mortal frame which is hard to obtain. Kuṭambai Siddha is another very popular Siddha poet, who addresses his profoundly mystic song to a child wearing the ear ornament, kuṭambai. The last important Siddha is Idattattar Siddha who hails from a jungle of cowherd and hence his name. He has couched his songs in the form of a dialogue between two cowherds tending their cows and sheep. In the process of tending, milking, etc., all his ideas are expressed in their words. There are a few minor Siddhas of lesser importance, like the Enadi Siddha.

## SIDDHA WRITING:

All the Siddhas are a group of mystics who revolt against caste and rituals and the established order of religion. They are no doubt bhaktas but their bakti is of a different type. They are very critical of the practice of religion but always hold fast to the one Supreme God and pray for His Grace. Their revolt is only in the manner of their criticism and the challenge they throw to orthodoxy. They are generally against idol worship and they emphasize the worship of God in the heart. All the Siddhas have been Śaivas.

The siddha seems to have been a general term applied to some who wrote medical treatises also. They had attained a certain level of achievement in medicine or siddhi, and so are known as siddhas. Their system of indigenous medicine, when practised correctly, has been found to be quite successful.

## LESSON-7

### POETIC WORKS OF

#### (a) KAMBAR

#### KAMBA RĀMĀYAṆAM:

Two of the greatest literary achievements of the Tamil muse are Tirukkuraḷ and Kamba Rāmāyaṇam. Kuraḷ is a charter for human conduct ; it transcends all limitations of time and space. It applies with equal force to men and women of all climes, of all times, of all creeds, castes and classes. Perhaps it was easy for its author to draw up such a universal testament, for the basic needs of man in regard to physical wants, mental aptitudes and spiritual goals are the same the world over.

But, for Kambar things were not so easy. The story which he took up was limited by space ; its characters, action and inter-relationship had all been determined for him ; he could not have a free hand in all these ; and again they could not be so easily understood elsewhere than in India, and that too generally only in the Hindu fold. Yet he has achieved a classic of universal appeal which can be the pride of any language and any people. Kuraḷ has been translated into many of the world languages but Kambar has not been translated ; that is the only difference.

Kambar, the king of Tamil literature and the emperor of poesy as he is often called, was to say the least, the result of penances, tapas, performed by the Tamil muse, for ages. His Rāmāyaṇa marks the crowning glory of Tamil literary production. However, the position was quite complicated for him. First, the choice of a subject. He could have easily written a new story, but the adaptation of an existing story was simpler. He easily chose the Rāmāyaṇa because the story here, unlike the Mahābhārata, was simple, it revolved round only three characters ; the hero Rāma, the heroine Sita, and the villain (in the twentieth century parlance) Rāvaṇa. Given these chief actors, Kambar had a canvas spacious enough to paint his epic. The story

of the Rāmāyaṇa was everybody's property. So when Kambar narrates it, the discerning reader may be expected to observe the manner of his narration, and not the story itself.

Again, the language had been perfected and its great potentialities fully explored by the time Kambar came on the scene. We shall quote Mr. Mahārājan in his inimitable words: "Kambar had behind him an unbroken poetic tradition of over a thousand years. He did not have the advantage which the Tamil poets of early spring had. Before his arrival, the Tamil language had been handled by scores of masters; while it was still narration and presentation, all the characters, their behaviour pattern, the situations and the drama, all his own." It is wholly absurd to say that Kambar's work is a translation of Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa. The mere fact that the first poet in Sanskrit, Vālmiki, gave the outline of the story to Kambar does not mean that the Tamil book is a translation. The Tamil book is entirely different from the Sanskrit in respect of everything except perhaps the names of the characters and the outline of the story — different in plot, in construction, in place, in age, in culture, in physical environment, in human relationship and in accepted values and ideals. We shall desist from saying more.

Following in the footsteps of the Āzvārs and the Nāyanmārs, Kambar has absolute command over the art of versification; he always has his fingers on the pulse of the people and his vocabulary, be it Tamil or Sanskritic, echoes are beating of this pulse. Again the dramatic situations. On every page in the narrative we have a short play. Characters appear, speak or act; the story works up to a pitch; and suddenly there is a curtainfall; the curtainfall is objectively perceivable as on a stage. Kambar is a great master in this technique of stage-management. Combined with this management is the dialogue. Modern stage dialogue writers can learn it with profit from our

poet. The very short boat scene in which Guha ferries Bharata and the royal entourage across the Ganges is a classic instance bringing into a play all these elements.

The boat scene is here summarised to introduce the dramatic element to the reader.

We know that Rāma, who was due to be crowned, was driven to the forest by Kaikeyi the mother of Bharata. Bharata, who was absent from the city at the time, came to know of Rāma's exile only on his return. Spurning the crown which was waiting for him, he started in pursuit of Rāma to bring him back and place him on the throne. His party had to cross the Ganges on their way. Guha, the leader of the hunters who ferried the entire royal party, placed Bharata and his brother, the three widowed queens and the sages like Vasiṣṭha on his boat, and himself rowed the boat across. He was an uneducated hunter who did not know any of the party. So as the boat was smoothly gliding over the wide expanse of the waters, he asked Bharata who the first lady, Kausalya, was.

Bharata replied: "She is the noble one who gave birth to him who had given birth to all the worlds; she is the one, who, because I was born, renounced all the wealth of royalty." Guha fell at Kausalya's feet and sobbed, whereupon she asked who he was. In reply Bharata told her that he was Guha, the sweetest friend of Rāma and elder brother to Lakṣmaṇa, Satrugṇa and himself. As Guha wept, the eyes of Bharata and Satrugṇa became wet with tears. Kausalya comforted them all in a song, which breathes the very spirit of serene benediction. As we read the song in the original, the air becomes vibrant with a thousand angelic wings, which waft a balmy breeze over the bruised heart, malleable and responsive, the Saṅgham poets had conferred upon the language a delicate reticence and austerity.

Tiruvalluvar had given it a lucidity, precision and terseness. The Azvārs and the Nāyanmārs had given the language an extraordinary suppleness and a warm and moving song quality. It appeared as if all the potentialities of the language had been thoroughly exploited before Kambar's arrival. But, in spite of these handicaps, Kambar's genius gave to the language fresh powers of articulation and made it serve the pure perfection of poetry.

The Kamba Rāmāyaṇa has to be viewed and studied in the background of real history and not of our whims and fancies. Born and bred and steeped in the Kāvēri culture, the poet had not seen a bright and powerful empire around him. The Cōzas were still only local chiefs, not powerful monarchs; yet not dormant, but valiantly struggling for power and supremacy in their own land. Contemporary life was not as ideal or as glamorous as he would have wished it. So he pictures an ideal rule, an ideal life and an ideal people in Kōsala-nādu; what he has portrayed is not real at all. His ethics, his patriotism and his valour are all on the ideal plane. While speaking of Kambar, we feel it is wrong to think of Brahminism or Jainism or Buddhism as forces which had moulded his narration and his outlook; we can only think of Kāvēri-ism and Kambar-ism. To say that he copied this from Saṅgham poetry, the other from Kuraḷ and a third from the Azvārs and Nāyanmārs as many critics love to imagine, is not to recognise the dimensions of his writing. To one who has a panoramic view of life, of human character, its depth and innermost secrets, all these have effortlessly and unconsciously fitted into their places. There is no question of copying or adapting. Kambar had a great legacy in art and letters; all the good things of the past are his own. He reproduces them in his work in a better form and to a better purpose; he does not learn them; they are all simply his.

When Kambar chose the Rāmāyaṇa, he did not choose it because Rāma was considered the incarnation of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being;

he chose it only for the potentialities for epic creation which it offered. Kambar did not portray him, he even elevated him to the level of the high ideal hero he had in mind. He was a supreme artist. The religion of the artist is to mould things according to his ideals; the critic can only assess how far the artist has succeeded in his creation. For aught we know, Kambar might have been a staunch Śaiva; that does not preclude him from making a great classic of the story of Rāma and if need be even from portraying Rāma as the Supreme Being of all religion. As one critic has remarked, Kambar had made three major currents of influence — the spirit of sheer aesthetic enjoyment of the Saṅgham period, the spirit of ennobling ethics in Kuraḷ, and the bhakti spirit of devout worship fostered by a religion in the shadow of Saṅkritisim before him — flow into one broad stream.

Kambar took the story of the Rāmāyaṇa from Vālmīki and has acknowledged it. The Vaiṣṇava canon had also helped him with not a few delicate embellishments. The entire story, it is of Man.

None of the word-magic of Kambar or the regality of his tone can come through in a translation, but lest the narrative should be interrupted, the following version of Kausalyā's utterance is given:

Grieve you not, my sons, grieve no more.

It is as well that the warriors of Truth  
renounced the Realm and came to the wilderness.

Behrend this mighty warrior,

who stands like a heroic elephant,

with arms strong as the hills;

and befriending him,

may the Five of you, becoming one,

govern this wide earth

for many and many a year.

In the mellowness of her grief, Kausalyā's mother-heart embraces the lowly hunter as one of her own blue-blooded sons. There is in this song a certain epic nobility of thought, which lifts the reader above human pettiness.

Pointing to Sumitrā, who looked like Virtue herself, Guha asked: "Pray tell me who is this lady brimming over with love." And Bharata replied: "She is the Junior Queen of the one, who died in order that unadulterating Truth might live. She is the great one, who begot that inseparable brother and showed that adorable Rāma had a brother too."

After this introduction, Kambar feels embarrassed that Guha's attention might fall on Kaikēyi. This feeling of embarrassment is brought out with superb poignancy in the next stanza:

Her spouse gone to the cremation ground,  
her son gone down the sea of grief,  
Rama that ocean of Grace —  
gone to the merciless jungle,  
the woman, who measured  
with the wanton cruelty of her mind,  
all the worlds, which, of yore,  
Mystic Viṣṇu had gauged with his height.  
Pointing to this woman —  
Guha said, "Pray, tell me who she is."

Now, Kambar makes Bharata give vent to all the pent up fury he nursed. He replied:

"She is the Author of all evil,  
the foster-mother of Revenge,  
She is the one  
who has ground me down mercilessly

Despite my lying in her accursed womb so long,

she is the one, the only one,

who has a beaming grief-free face.

in a world where all bodies seem dead.

Guess you not who she is?

The one stands this-wise

is the one who has generated me.

These were bitter words, which created an awkward situation for the entire assembly. The poet makes haste to relieve them and the reader from this predicament by bringing down the curtain on the boat scene. He hurriedly changes gear from a long ponderous metre to a short snappy one:

Even this pitiless woman

Guha saluted with his holy hands as his mother.

The boat, like a wingless swan,

swiftly reached ashore.

Rare dramatic skill has been employed by the poet in retrieving a situation, which in lesser hands, might well have degenerated into pathos. The similarity between a boat with in-drawn oars and wingless swan is so startling that the attention of the reader is diverted from a distressing predicament to the comeliness of an apt simile and to the urgent need for disembarkation.

Characterization is the chief forte of Kambar. Every character in the epic has a personality of his or her own and in a couple of words we can identify the person. No one is too small for Kambar in this regard. Maṇṭarai the Kūni, Sumitrā and so many other minor characters come to life at a magic touch from the poet: it is not as though characterization has been attempted only with the major characters like Rāma, Sita, Hanumān or Kumbhakarna.

We have not said here a word about the descriptions in Kambar descriptions of human beings, nature, emotions and situations; they are there in any place we choose to lay out fingers on. Abstract metaphysics and philosophy also we have in sufficient depth. In the

invocatory verses in each kāṇḍa, the words of praise from Virāṭa and the like, and even in descriptions like sunrise, we see Kambar forgetting the immediate present, and going to the roots of all being. The philosophy so touched upon, though apparently Vaiṣṇava, is not sectarian, but universal.

So this is the Rāmāyaṇa of Kambar. It is only in the fitness of things that while we had dealt with the other topics in a matter of fact manner, we have gone deeper in the case of this one subject. The Rāmāyaṇa of course consists of six books or kāṇḍas making up a total of more than ten thousand verses; the last book, the Yuddha kāṇḍa is naturally very large, the length of all other kāṇḍas put together. The epic begins with a description of the state and the city, and Rāma's birth, and ends with the crowning of Rāma after Rāvaṇa is slain and Sita is rescued.

Many prejudiced and distorted accounts, legends and superstitions have grown round the name of Kambar that it is not easily possible to extricate the poet out of the mazo of such material. He is said to have been of a low caste; there were organised attempts to run down his caste; stories about to show that he was not in favour at the royal court; that he was actually belittled by the great poetess Avvai; that he was a poor man not knowing where his next meal would come from; that he was shunted about between his place and Śrīraṅgam in a hectic attempt to secure the approval of the orthodox for his epic; that he was really in the good books of Saraśvatī, who always came to his succour when the need arose. Scholars have written the most contradictory views about his book — that he wrote his epic when there was no empire, when the Cōzas were struggling to come into power; that he wrote his epic when the Cōza empire was at its zenith, and so on. We do not enter here into any controversy regarding any of these stories or regarding his date. His book is before us. He has praised therein his patron Saḍayan of Vannainallūr in ten situations. The commendatory verses to the Rāmāyaṇa say that he was a vāllal of Tiru Azundūr in Cōzanāḍu, he was a kavi-cakravartī, he published his Rāma kāṭhai on the aṣṭa day of the month of Pāṇḍuni,

in the presence of Lord Rāṅganatha, under the patronage of Saḍayan of Vannainallūr in the Śaka year 807 (A.D. 885). Scholars have distorted all the statements reproduced here except the one, Cōzanāḍu. It is not possible to discuss here even a single one of the controversies. We shall be content just to state that Kambar wrote his epic in the year A.D. 885, not in any royal court, but in the presence of Saḍayan of Vannainallūr (a village which has now disappeared, a few miles off Tiru Azundūr, Kambar's place). Low caste is certainly no bar to a poet, but the fact is that Kambar came of a high caste from an affluent family, and Saḍayan was not a patron in the western sense but a connoisseur who encouraged Kambar in his literary efforts.

There has been no other Rāmāyaṇa in any language after Vālmiki and before Kambar. This is natural because in all the languages of India, the evolution of literature took place long after the days of Kambar. His Rāmāyaṇa had so impressed learned men that they called him the most learned of poets. His book seems to have been widely popular in the neighbouring linguistic areas of Andhra, Kannada and Kerala; Kamba Rāmāyaṇa discourses had been conducted in these areas and the princes and the others had created many endowments for remunerating the exponents of Kamba Rāmāyaṇa there. For eleven centuries since it was written, it has remained a potent force for shaping the education, culture and religious faith of the Tamiznāḍu in particular and South India in general. Kamba Rāmāyaṇa discourses still continue to attract thousands of people from all ranks of society, who are thrilled by the songs. Kambar will live for all time, because his voice is the voice of Eternity.

#### (b) TĀYUMĀNAVAR\*

The seventeenth century was a period of turmoil in the history of South India. The local chieftains were often quarrelling among themselves, and the East India Companies of European nations, not content with trade, were interfering in local politics and were adding to the propagation of their religion. Such were the times when saints appeared on the scene and guided the people. Tamiznāḍu produced one of the greatest among them, Saint Tāyumānavar, who combined a statesman's ability with spiritual greatness.

\* Courtesy: Publications Division.



At Vēḍāraṇyam in the south of Tanjore district, there was a gentleman named Kēḍilippā Pillai who belonged to the vellāla (agricultural) community. The prince in one of his tours saw Kēḍilippā Pillai working piously and efficiently as a trustee of the Śiva temple at Vēḍāraṇyam. It struck him that this gentleman would be able to manage the palace affairs quite well and invited him to do so. Kēḍilippā's son had been given in adoption to his elder brother who was childless and thus became childless himself. He prayed earnestly to Lord Śiva at Tiruchirāppalli, who is known as God Tāyumānavar for a son. This prayer was granted and Kēḍilippā Pillai's wife Gajavallī gave birth to a son and the boy was naturally called after the benign deity — Tāyumānavar. He was born in the Year 1705.

The handsome, intelligent boy grew up and mastered three languages — Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. His writings show that he was well versed in all the schools of philosophy then prevalent. His devotion to God and thirst for God-realisation grew despite the duties in the palace. On the death of his father, Tāyumānavar had naturally to take duties at the palace and became known for his diligence. There were often threats and attacks from the Arcot Nawab's soldiers and Maharatta marauders and it was not easy to withstand all these. On one such occasion when the enemy attack was proceeding outside, Kṛṣṇappa Nāik of Madurai, who was ruling in the South, met with his death. His queen was a masterly woman and the situation was saved somehow.

Tāyumānavar had to continue in his post at the queen's request. His task was now harder than before. A palace supervisor had not only to manage all the court affairs — financial, social, religious and what not — but had also to be a confidant of the ruling sovereign. Here came the hitch: the queen found minister Tāyumānavar to be admirable not only in the qualities of his head and heart, but also for his personal charm. Tāyumānavar, however, was a man of probity and decided to get away from the awkward situation.

His younger brother, Arulayya who later became his disciple, was there to help out Tāyumānavar. He told his respected elder brother that a horse was waiting outside the city gate to take him to Rāmnād, a comparatively peaceful part of the country. Tāyumānavar decided

that he should seize the opportunity and left the place. On reaching Rāmnād he was welcomed by the Rājah of the place who arranged for the saint's quiet stay in meditation, untrammelled by worldly distractions.

After spending some time in that peaceful place, Tāyumānavar felt the need to travel to other places of pilgrimage. His visit to Cholaṅbaram is worthy of special mention. At this place is the ancient temple where Lord Śiva manifests. His cosmic dance and souls released from worldly bondage are supposed to dwell in the ethereal space there in the sanctum. It was about this time, if not earlier, that the Saint began to compose his famous hymns which, apart from their richly suggestive Tamil idiom, are set to various tunes whose haunting melody is surcharged with high wisdom and intense devotion. Many of these songs have come down to us, thanks to the diligent care of his disciple, his younger brother Arulayya. In connection with his visit to Rāmēśvaram a miracle has been recorded. There was no rain at all in that region for a long time, and the people naturally prayed to Saint Tāyumānavar to relieve them of their suffering. The holy man took pity on them and pronounced a stanza in Acolā metre, which may be thus rendered: "O clouds, if it is true that the Śiva-faith is the true faith, if the Deity inculcated by it is the Lord who has the crescent moon on His head, if the real path be the control of senses and immersion in bliss — then may you pour down the rain!"

As he was finishing the stanza a cold breeze sprang up, dark clouds filled the sky and heavy showers accompanied by thunder and lightning deluged the parched-up land.

In the meantime, news of the happenings at Tiruchi had reached Tāyumānavar's relations at Vēḍāraṇyam. His mother especially was anxious that he should lead a householder's life and hence she sent his elder brother Śivacidaṅbaram to find him out at Rāmanāthapuram and persuade him to return home. So Śivacidaṅbaram travelled all the way via Tiruchi to Rāmanāthapuram; it was not very difficult to trace the journey of Tāyumānavar and Arulayya as the saintly brother had been observed and welcomed by many on the way. So finally Śivacidaṅbaram reached the hut where Tāyumānavar was dwelling and

conveyed to him his mother's wish. Tāyumānavar was unwilling to enter again the worldly life but his respect for his mother as well as his Guru's hint that he should lead a house-holder's life before final initiation, compelled him to accede.

It was a happy coincidence that Tāyumānavar's bride was a girl after his own heart, modest and devoted to her husband. She bore him a son named Kanakasabhai, reminiscent of the Cidambaram shrine. She left this world of sorrows not long after confinement; the boy was taken care of by Śivacidambaram, and also Aruḷayya who later initiated him in the spiritual life.

Tāyumānavar was now free to devote himself exclusively to God. Rāmanāthapuram, the former centre of his austerities, irresistible attracted him. There he could sit under a tamarind tree in self-absorption, forgetting the world for days together. Another disciple who joined the Saint's service is known as Kōdikkarai Jñāni. He has recorded that Tāyumānavar left this world in the middle of January 1742. The manner of his disappearance is shrouded in legends but his historic intervention in the Portuguese invasion, shortly before his demise, should be mentioned. Sēṭupaṭi, the king of Rāmanāthapuram, and his kinsman Kāttaiya Tēvar had a misunderstanding which grew into enmity. Taking advantage of the situation the Portuguese came with a navy to Rāmēsvaram island and hoisted their flag on the famous temple. Sēṭupaṭi did not know what to do but our Saint who sympathized with the world's troubles, could not sit quiet. Reconciling with the royal kinsmen, he caused an army under Sēṭupaṭi's lead to proceed to Rāmēsvaram. But wishing to avoid bloodshed he went in front and spoke to the Portuguese and their missionaries about the sin of human slaughter. The latter were touched but the captain of the navy stood out. However, he too submitted on hearing that the Dutch were attacking his ships. Tāyumānavar impressed on his people the need for unity; peace was restored and it was celebrated as a great victory.

The life and teachings of Saint Tāyumānavar have a significance for modern times. In early days he was deeply concentrated with warring creeds and schools of philosophy, and his own dialectic powers must have been great. Initiated by one in the line of disciples of the great mystic, Saint Tirumūlar, he practised silent meditation and attain-

ed great spiritual heights, acquiring the power of reconciliation of various schools of thought. Even after becoming an ascetic and a man of realisation, he followed the tradition of pilgrimage to sacred places, singing an inspiring hymn in each place.

We may ask now whether he did not favour a particular school to shape his own teaching. In his writings we can see a distinct leaning towards pure Advaita, quite different from the theory of illusion. This is natural as Śaiva Siddhānta was developed in Tamiznāḍu by Saint Meykaṇḍār and his followers according to which, in addition to the three functions of Deity, viz. creation, sustenance and dissolution, we are introduced to the ideas of concealment and the action of grace. That there is the idea and realization of the Transcendent and Immanent, Paraparam. Tāyumānavar says in Parāparakkannī that it is by divine grace that the Lord manifests and governs this earth and other worlds. But being the Absolute, He is above all things material. A mountain of bliss, He is both Immanent and Transcendent. To His devotees He is ever near, knowing their innermost thoughts and wishes and fulfill them by showering His grace. He can be described as the most precious treasure of man or the Highest Knowledge we can conceive. It is to realise Him that the Saint travelled to several sacred places and abodes of saints. His graceful look and consolatory word we prayed for, so that our anxieties may cease for ever. But his fundamental prayer was that we should never forget Him; also that we may consider all beings as our own and be compassionate to them. Even physical immortality is possible by perfection in Kundālīni Yoga, but to still the unstable mind is a higher achievement. Above all He gets us self knowledge.

The result of this highest realization is the immersion in Bliss. Tāyumānavar had an intense experience of bliss and he describes it in unique terms. God appeared to him as the joy filling the whole universe within and without. Sometimes it is felt as a flood or something indescribable of which conjugal bliss (however inferior) is indicated as a symbol. Indeed Tāyumānavar sings about the union in love with Divine Being as many other saints have done, e.g. in the Song of Tōmpa and Cita Govinda.

An apposite point for the proper comprehension of Indian culture is his synthesis of Vēdānta and Śaiva Siddhānta. It should be brought home to certain circles in the South that Tāyumānavar upholds the greatness of Upaniṣadic doctrine by which many kings and saints had achieved salvation. He speaks of the various schools of philosophy as rivers which flow from different directions into the ocean of Truth. Similarly, he says out of his experience that all forms of Yōga are subsumed into the supreme Yōga. He has pointed out clearly that Dvaita, the doctrine of duality, which indeed embraces all multiplicity, is only a step to arrive at Advaita, the doctrine and experience of unity. 'Hearing' (śrāvaṇa) is charya, 'contemplation (manana) is kriya, and 'realization' or sure experience of Yōga; this explains the similarity or even identity of the methods of Vēdānta and Siddhānta. To quote from his Paripūrṇa Ānandam (the Full Bliss): "My work is always Thy work, my individuality is not separate from Thee and hence I am not foreign to Thy being. This is the way to reconcile Vēdānta and Siddhānta, to be sure!" (stanza 5). Obviously the "emotional integration" of the followers of different paths was no problem of Saint Tāyumānavar. A very telling symbolism he makes use of is that the horse of Āgama gallops on the road of the Vēda!

While on this topic we may mention that Tāyumānavar in all his writings does not set much store by the various stories of God and the Godly in the Purāṇas. At least some of those stories are apt to mislead us, with the fast changing mentality of modern times. Hence this Saint always emphasises the original principles which enlighten us about God and the things that are holy. It shows how a man who successfully took a prominent part in the important affairs of this world could also find himself quite at home among highly abstract principles. "God has neither caste nor family, birth nor death, bondage nor release; form, formlessness nor any name!" (Poruḷ Vaṇakkam, stanza 5). As He is timeless He is without any distinction of day or night. There is Pūrṇam.

A homely representation of these fundamental truths is also possible. We the ordinary souls are compared to cows or animals in general — Paśu; our state of bondage is the rope, Pāsam; the Lord who releases us is Pati. In fact Paśupati which is a name of Śiva

points to the One who is our Overlord. He takes care of us, feeds us and shelters us, always sees to it that we do not go astray. As we grow thus under His protection, some of the souls become gradually ripe — pakva or fit for salvation; then He releases such souls from bondage. But as He is gracious and impartial to all, He brings up solicitude even those who 'ripen' rather slowly; hence no one is outside the pale of salvation or mokṣa for ever. Needless to say, the Lord does not look for any return for this act of grace, although it is natural for the released souls to feel grateful and hence bound to Him (not bound to the world as before) for all time thence. But does He come before us in person? That happens only to the most highly evolved souls who are capable of superhuman efforts) (tapas) for the purpose; to all others who are thirsting for grace, He sends his emanations or saints according to the need of each soul. Indeed one form of Śiva is Dakṣiṇāmūrṭi or the Teacher who illumines by advice. This form of God is represented as a young person sitting under a banyan tree, surrounded by four aged sages who are the eternal wise men. These four are utterly devoid of egotism and can, by their blessings, give the light and bliss of salvation to thousands of souls.

Many of Tāyumānavar's songs are surcharged with emotion and show a close intimacy with God. Perhaps a good specimen is the famous song beginning Pomai mātarai from which we may cull a few stanzas:

"Lord of my life who last sought me, I was seeking gold, women and land! Henceforth I will seek only Thee and the pure ether of Thy grace."

"Thou hast said that whatever is called mine is really Thine, so I have consecrated it all to Thee. O life of this poor one! If Thou should'st subject me again to grief, how can I be saved?"

"Without proper behaviour or good qualities, ignorant of the way of Thy grace, can this little one be saved? Eating poison Thou did'st come forth as nectar! It is time to see my Father's high status . . ."

"O Lord, doubtless Thou hast made my body and its actions harmonise with the inner spirit. False though I be, when the falsehood of my mind cease and result in the full and true bliss!"

"Dwelling in me as my life, won't it be moral for Thee to wipe off sorrow from my mind? My mind knows only to think of Thy graceful face of intense beauty . . ."

Tāyumanāvar had experience of these great ones and when he was dwelling in a hut near Rāmanāthapuram in his later life, he spoke about this wonderful knowledge and power to his disciples Arulāyya and Kodikkalai Jñāni.

Mention must be made here about the siddhas — the perfect ones whom Tāyumanāvar adored. They made their bodies and minds perfect by following Astāṅga (or Rāja) Yōga of the sage Patañjali.

Tāyumanāvar's intense yearning for realization will be evident from the four stanzas in which he quotes a word or phrase from the hymns of the first four great Śaivite saints, asking poignantly when he will attain their sublime realization. The means for such attainment is revealed as abiding in unity and the consequent bliss by initiation of the one word "sit quiet!" (Ānandakalippu, 14).

He says that his desire is to propagate the gospel of "non-killing" throughout the world (Parāparakkannī, 54). He prays for divine grace so that he may have the compassion born of considering his life as quite similar to the lives of all (ibid., 65).

We shall conclude by echoing Tāyumanāvar's sentiment that the service of saints is the surest and easiest means to attain the state of bliss.

### (c) RĀMALIṄGA SVĀMI \*

Over one hundred years ago, on 30 January 1874, Vallalār Rāmaliṅga Svāmi the apostle of Samarasa Siddha Satya Saīmārga or the universal religion of humanity retired to a room in the "Abode of Siddhi" near Vadalūr not far from Cidambaram in South India, and

was never seen again alive or dead. By a curious coincidence, seventy-four years later, 30 January 1948 was to be the day of martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi, another prophet of human unity and universal well-being. In some important respects, Gandhiji's ministry and martyrdom were a continuation and partial fulfilment of Rāmaliṅga Svāmi's great mission in life. They were both essentially men of God, and Rāmaliṅga ultimately identified Reality with Aruṭperum-Jyōti or the Light Divine; Gandhiji too finally saw God as Truth and had a particular fascination of Newman's celebrated hymn "Lead Kindly Light!" Rāmaliṅga and Gandhiji are surely among the supreme benefactors of humanity. Vallalārs — angles and ministers of Grace — who come down from time to time to apply correctives to the fallen human condition and make efforts to raise it up.

Again, like Rāmakṛṣṇa. Paramahansa in Bengal, like Dayānanda Saraswati in Western India, Rāmaliṅga Svāmi in Tamiznāḍu was also a prophet of the dawn of Renascent India after the darkness and bleakness consequent on the trauma of British conquest and the subsequent national humiliation. The country no doubt needed economic, political, social and cultural rejuvenation, but more basically still what the country needed was a moral and spiritual regeneration, and men like Rāmakṛṣṇa, Dayānanda and Rāmaliṅga were the potent power-houses of such resurgence. Rāmakṛṣṇa took the Kingdom of Heaven by violence and brought it down, Dayānanda was an evangelist and organizer of genius, and Rāmaliṅga was the poet of sovereign compassion, the apostle of universal love, benevolence and harmony. Then came Svāmi Vivekānanda who carried the Paramahansa's message to the ends of the world, Nārāyaṇa Guru in Kerala who brought about a social and religious revolution, Ramaṇa Mahārṣi in Tamiznāḍu who embodied in himself the utter poise of the Infinite. Gāndhiji himself, and Śrī Aurobindo the prophet of the Life Divine. If Rāmaliṅga Svāmi anticipated Gāndhiji's acute social concern and his enfranchising universal love, he also shared Śrī Aurobindo's vision of Supramental Light and his dream of revolutionary change and physical transformation. On the other hand Rāmaliṅga harked back too (so one might think) to the Tamiz mystics of earlier ages — Tirumular, Mānikkavācakar, Sambandhar, Appar, Sundarar, Pattinttār, Arunagirī, Tāyumanāvar — and was a God intoxicated God-realized

hymnist whose *Tirumurtu* has already taken its place along with *Tirumandiram*, *Tevāram*, *Tiruvācakam* and other classics of mystic and devotional poetry.

Rāmalinga's life is briefly told. He was born at Marudūr near Cidambaram on 5 October 1823, as the youngest of his father's five children. The privileges of birth, affluence and formal education were not Rāmalinga's and his life ran a course unconventional and unpredictable. When he was taken as a child of five months to the Temple of Cidambaram, he had an experience which he was to recall in later years as follows:

When my mother took me as a baby  
To the sanctum at Tillai —  
You revealed to me, as the curtain rose,  
All the transcendental Truth;  
Sheer God knowledge ripened in my nonage,  
O my soul's sap and Home!

Longing his father early, he migrated with the family to Madras after a very brief interregnum at Ponnēri. In the Muttialpet area in Madras City, Rāmalinga grew up under the guardianship of his elder brother Sabhāpathi and his wife, and often felt attracted, as iron to the magnet, to the Lord in the Kandakōṭṭam temple. As a boy of nine, while still living in his brother's house, Rāmalinga had a singular experience. Looking into the mirror in his room he saw, not his own reflection, but the Lord at Tiruttani:

Six beautiful faces, twelve shoulders  
Matching and imperious;  
The Whole crowned by a garland of flowers —  
And ravishing lotus-feet,  
With his sharp battle-axe, he was mounted  
On his majestic peacock,  
All lit by aura of Grace — thus I saw  
Thanika's Lord in the glass.

In the coming years, Rāmalinga was constantly God-intoxicated, and spent much of his time either in silent contemplation or in fulsome praise of the Lord in one or another of His auspicious Forms. Although he had no regular schooling, he became quickly intimate with classics of Śaiva devotional literature, and gave impromptu discourses before large congregations, carrying conviction by the fervour of his voice and the force of his winning personality. He also composed songs with extemporaneous ease almost since his ninth year, pouring forth song after song comprehending the entire gamut of bhakti or God-love. There are occasional hints in his verse relating to some of his boyhood experiences:

Once when as a boy I slept all alone  
On a pial, and slipped down,  
Wasn't it You that held me up in Your arms,  
And then gently let me down?  
Once as I lay asleep on a pial,  
A boy wearied and hungry,  
You brought me a plate of the choicest food  
And fed me so graciously . . .  
Sambandā! Immortal Śiva-Guru!  
Refuge of the devotees!  
In the days of my green and callow youth  
When I had no light within  
And I lacked the steady light of knowledge  
And strength of experience,  
You led me up to narrow path of Grace,  
With no slipping afterwards.

It is not surprising that, although married at a young age to his sister's daughter, Rāmalinga should have soon turned away from married life, the call Divine being far stronger.

Rāmalinga's inner life — which was infinitely more significant than his outer existence — was a journey and a quest, a fairly protracted struggle with its vicissitudes of defeat and success, gloom and ecstasy, and it may also be described as a movement from Muruga at Kandakōṭṭam to Muruga at Tiruttani, thence to Tvāṅṅar at Tiruvorlyr, and finally to Natarāpa at Tillai (Cidambaram). Rāma

linga's ardour for the Divine — whether as Muruga, Tyāgēsar or as Nataraja — was more compelling than an ardent bride's for her Lord, and indeed many of Rāmaliṅga's song-sequences are couched in the traditional language of bridal mysticism. Here, for example, the Bride (Rāmaliṅga) confides to her comrades with assurance and candour:

He will come, my friends, riding a peacock;  
 Bhaktas will receive largesse:  
 My friends, He is crowned with unsullied fame;  
 Let's sing His glories and dance.

Here is another charming piece of disarming naïvete:

I spoke fair to the great lord at Otri:  
 "Come to my house and take food,  
 And after the siesta you may go."  
 He came, I served Him with food.  
 But He only said, "You have deceived me!"  
 Oh my friend, what did He mean?

Other poems, however, as in the famous Mahādēvi Mālai for example, it is rather the mystic and the pantheist that speaks to us. The verses seem to have torrentially tumbled out of Rāmaliṅga's lips, and there is rich improvisation as well as utter ease and naturalness in the poetic utterance. Here are a few stanzas:

O lord! Thou art seed, sprout, seedling,  
 The pith and marrow of all,  
 Foliage, fruit and their beneficiary:

Thou art segment and fulfilled whole,  
 Essence, experience, bliss,  
 Poise of universal witness self;

Thou art pearl, ruby and sole  
 Immortal Diamond: . . .

O Lord! Thou art gold, jewel, adornment  
 Without and within,  
 And purity;  
 Thou art earth, mountain and sea,  
 Moon, Sun and the Heavens;

Thou art beginning, end, and the realm between —  
 From the cloud burst of Thy Grace issue  
 The full resonant thunder,  
 The lightning-flash  
 And flooded bliss . . .

Thou art indeed my life, O lord,  
 The life of my life and my soul's mate;

Thou art my own mother and father both,  
 My priceless possession,  
 My heart's love,  
 My code of Dharma,  
 My kith and kin;

Thou art my Guru elect, my bliss of union  
 My whole existence  
 And my Lord Protector.

Of the vicissitudes of his spiritual journey, again, many of the canonical assertions speak movingly:

Entangled in the mire of Worldly life  
 I wriggle and forget You;

Bear with me yet, and forgive, O My Lord  
 of Thanikacadam Hill . . .

I was once vile beyond comparison  
 Yet You have refashioned me;

A flame-like mind in a golden body  
 With supreme understanding;

You've led me to all realizations  
 And ecstatic ānanda;

How shall I describe Your benefactions? . . .

Thinking of the great Sun's diurnal course  
 And the dreaded run of Time,

Give not worried about the God of Death  
 And his angry attention.

Remember Mārkaṇḍēya's victory,  
And chant Namas-śivāya . . .

The name of the Lord is the sure refuge  
Of all those that hasten to Him . . .

O this great effulgent Grace bestowed on me  
By the Lord's boundless mercy;

He launched me as a mother in the world  
To do my great ministry,

And gave me a deathless golden body  
And a matching soul within.

It is probable that, attaining the middle stage of his life, Rāmalinga felt he had enough of the hurry and noise and strife of the metropolis, reacted strongly against its derailments and distractions, and decided definitively to respond to the call of the Lord at Tīllai. Visiting the temple, he experienced again the mystical tremendum of his childhood recognition, adoration and ecstasy in the presence of Natarāja. He settled down for a few years at Karuṅguzi, but he travelled also a good deal, gave discourses and indited songs. His vision of Reality grew new dimensions, he continually saw the Divine in Man and circumambient Nature, and he seized the ultimate equation of Creator with his Creation. Rāmaliṅga would have none of the man-made divisions of caste, creed, dogma or ritual, and he eloquently preached against all forms of bigotry, cruelty and human inequity. More and more he visualized Reality or the Divine as pure and puissant Light — Arut-perum-Jyōti and saw in its realisation alone the clue to life-transformation including the possible transformation of the human body. From our flowed life to life in love — than life charged with Grace — and, as the apotheosis, life suffused with delight or ānanda! Rāmalinga took also several practical steps in the last period of his life to advance the realization of his ideal of human harmony and global well-being. He gave a central place in his scheme of life to the play of compassion, and he saw that the mystic vision of Arut-perum-Jyōti was allied to the complementary power of Tanip-perum-Karuṇai (uniquely sovereign compassion):

Every time I saw crops withering,  
I withered too; as often  
As I saw hungry destitute beggars,  
I too fainted with hunger;  
The sight of chronic victims to disease  
Made me tremble like a leaf;  
And the defeat of the meritorious  
Has made me wilt in pain . . .  
Compassion has overwhelmed me as oft  
As I've mixed with living beings . . .  
My life's run and soul of compassion are one  
Not wholly different things;  
My life must cease when my compassion dies —  
I swear this at Your feet.

He established the Samarasa Vēda Saṁmārga Saṅgha in 1865, and the Satya Vēda Dharmaśāla two years later. The same year saw the publication of a collection of his songs and mystical outpourings called Tiru-Arūtpā (The Golden Book of Grace), and this both consolidated Rāmaliṅga's popularity as a singer-saint and provoked a somewhat accrimonious controversy. It was thought by some people that the use of the word Arūtpā by Rāmaliṅga was rather sacrilegious, since it sought to put the book on a par with Tēvāram and Tiruvācakam. Opinion was for a time sharply divided between orthodoxy led by the formidable Ārumuga Nāvalar and the followers of Rāmaliṅga Svāmi. It is said, however, that when there was an actual confrontation in the court, Nāvalar too, like the rest, rose to greet the serene white-clad Rāmaliṅga Vallalār. It was only some years after Rāmaliṅga's passing away that Tiru-Arūtpā could win universal acceptance, both as a body of hymns and as poetry compounded at once of radiant sincerity, sparkling clarity and honeyed sweetness.

From his boyhood almost, Rāmalinga had been composing songs as the mood or occasion dictated and six thousand of these verses have been collected and enshrined in the six books of Tiru-Arūtpā. But it is fairly certain that a large number, as they were extemporaneously sung, were never actually recorded, or the records could not be traced at the time the collection was prepared for the press. Even so Tiru-Arūtpā is a truly impressive and inspiring body of devotional poetry.



and the definitive Ooran Adigal's edition of 1972 has arranged the songs and song sequences for the first time in their strict chronological order. The one perennial theme is the Divine, but Rāmaliṅga plays numberless variations on it, using with marvellous dexterity about thirty varieties of metrical form and many popular tunes. Repetition, refrain, assonance, alliteration, rhyme, all appear as naturally as leaves springing up on a tree in the season of spring. And yet it is the bhāva, the utter earnestness and sincerity, the total absorption in the Divine, the complete identification with all humanity and all life that made Tiru-Arūtpā wholly worthy of the name, a rare testament of Divine love that strikes a responsive chord in seasoned scholar and unlettered commoner alike. The very qualities of spontaneity, emotive richness and mellifluous sweetness that make the songs immediately so moving and effective also made them untranslatable, the more so into a language like English with its own poetic tradition and structural idiosyncracies. The rendering, to be readable at all, have to be freely experimental. My English rendering in the course of this essay are such tentative experiments, and here are a few more:

O Thou Mountain within love's grasp:

O sovereign Power inhabiting Love's hut:

Thou Omnipresence caught in Love's net:

Nectar held in Love's pitcher:

Thou Light of Knowledge that's love.

Thou Effulgence packed in atomic Love,

Thou Lord Supreme incarnate in Love . . .

I'll sing, or I'll bend,

If Thou wilt I should:

I'll dine, or be humbled, or sleep,

Or keep awake and active,

If you must have it so:

What's it that by itself

My insignificance can do?

Like the generations of plantain-trees  
Are the line of devotees.

Am I not one in their unending line?

How is it, then, I suffer?

Can you acountenance it? — Is it proper?

Has it Your divine sanction?

O my Lord Dancer in the Golden Hall,  
Am I not your son indeed?

I can no longer endure this burden  
Of totality of pain.

Turn here and now your effulgence of Grace  
And end my night of sorrow.

O my blissful Dancer-King, wear this garland  
Of praise for my well-being:

For impartially you charge with delight  
The learned and unlearned:

You concede the rare gift of sight alike  
To those who see, and won't see;

You are Bounty, and it flows equally  
To the puissant and the weak;

You are Reason, that guides the perceptive  
And the unreasonable;

O Justiciar abiding with the pure  
As well as the pernicious:

Thou Goodness that must decree the good  
Of gods, as also titans!

My mind of adamant has now melted  
And thirsts for communion;

The intellect is stilled, Love wells up and  
Overflows: This is the time . . .

For a change, there is this bit of light-hearted musing by Rāmalinga on being invited to a wedding:

Nor shoes nor shirt spotless white:  
 Nor fresh dhoti, nor style:  
 Nor cash in hand, nor bulky frame:  
 No home, no daring —  
 O my mind, how will you enact  
 The Wedding Guest?

On the other hand, Rāmalinga had no doubt at all regarding his role as Messenger of God:

I've been vouchsafed  
 The Grace of God  
 And sent to sow the seed  
 Of the way of Truth  
 In the flawed hearts  
 Of the world's hypocrites —  
 To help them attain here  
 The bliss of Divine Life.

It was not, however, Rāmalinga Svāmi's aim any more than it was the Buddha's, Guru Nānak's or Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa's — to establish an entirely new religion. He rather aimed at affirming and bringing out the throbbing warmth at the heart of all true religious experience. He felt strongly that caste, creed, blind custom, dogma, superstition, ritual or dialectics should not divide man from man, or raise barriers between man and God. He founded the Satya Jñāna Sabha (presently amplified into Samarasa Suddha Saṁmārga Satya Jñāna Sabha) in 1872 at Vadalūr, and it was housed in a specially constructed octagonal building where the Ultimate was symbolized at Jyōti or Light. The Sabha was to be a place of prayer where people drawn from diverse religions, sects, castes and creeds could transcend all doctrinal adhesions and constrictions and breathe the ambience of the Love Divine (Tāṭip perum Karuṇai) and bask in the sovereignty of the Light Divine (Arut-perum-Jyōti). In his own culminating experience, Reality had come to him as the Light Divine after the heart of all creation, a Light feeding and fed by the Love

Divine, and it was Divine Grace that compelled the play of both Light and Love. Thus Arut-perum-Jyōti became Rāmalinga's mantra of mantras, the mūla-mantra, and in his Arut-perum-Jyōti Ahava! and elsewhere he made these grand affirmations:

Grace the Supreme Light! Grace the Supreme Light!  
 Grace the Supreme Light! The Grace!

Crowned on Āgama, on the Vēda crowned,  
 And soaring higher: the Grace!

Who helped me beyond the seven oceans  
 Of birth and bondage? the Grace!

Biggest of big, Smallest of the small,  
 Rarest of the rare; the Grace!

Centred in my mind, diffusing global  
 Illumination: the Grace! . . .

O great mystery of creation out  
 Of earth, womb, sweat, egg: the Grace!

The Light Divine that knows  
 No beginning, middle or end  
 Has wholly mingled in  
 My heart's blood-stream;

I too have become the Permanent.  
 Beyond caste, creed or dogma;  
 In the High Street of Pure Existence  
 I bear witness to You!

What Rāmalinga wished to see securely established was a new society whose members were electrically free from all man-made limitations, and living in the enfranchizing and harmonizing play of Light and bound to one another by the vibrations of the universal force of Love. He preached too in this not an escape into another world of felicity or Nirvāṇa, a Kailāsa or Vaikunṭha, but rather the winning of an Earthly Paradise. Here, for example, is one of his moving exhortations:

Come, O wordly men  
 Grovelling in misery:

Through constant brooding  
 And steady understanding  
 Melting in emotion,  
 Bathed in Perennial tears  
 Filled with love —  
 Imploring the soul's Lord,  
 Nectar of Grace,  
 Delight of Being,  
 King of Enlightenment —  
 Know that you can all gain,  
 The deathless life . . .  
 This is the time to enter  
 The golden Life Divine.

And yet the heights of realization reached by the Saint in the course of a career wholly dedicated to Love of God and Service to Man were not to be reached in a sudden canter by common humanity. It is therefore hardly to be wondered at that many of his disciples and followers fell short of his expectations, driving him at last to lock up the Sabha and take away the key to Siddhivilaham or 'Abode of Siddhi' which was his own modest residence. For himself, however, there was no need for any journeying farther, for he had arrived and won the Lord. Traditionally Rāmalinga composed the magnificent Anubhava-Mālā (The Garland of Realization) on 30 January 1874, the last day of his life. By its very nature, the pull of the human soul towards Śiva, of paśu for paṭi, of Rāmalinga Svāmī for Natarāja evokes a measure of erotic imagery, though not to the same degree as in the imagined Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa relationship. There are thus passages in Anubhava-Mālā that are cast in the purest nāyaki-nāyaka-bhava and are full of the music of bridal mysticism without the slightest of mere eroticism:

My eyes had met, and when our hands were linked  
 I was lost to my senses;  
 I knew why Veda says God experience  
 Surpasses all human joys;  
 Whenever I recall that moment's bliss  
 Of Divine communion,

Once more that ecstasy floods me again,  
 As if happening only then . . .

It was when my Spouse took me visibly  
 I thrilled quaffing elixir;

But how shall I in words express the joy  
 Of the inner union?

No mere humdrum sensory affair this  
 But pure God experience —

There was no separativity;  
 I was IT, and both were ONE.

In an earlier poem too Rāmalinga had recorded:

Faster and faster I mounted steps,  
 I sipped nectar in amaze;

My mind softened and melted, tears flowed free,  
 And thoughts simmered in delight.

Then illuminative wisdom welled up  
 And I saw the supreme Lord,  
 And instead of my useful skin-and-bone,  
 I had a golden body.

He had arrived, and he would have gladly guided others too to the goal; such, as he saw it, was also his mission:

People are fair in form yet foul within,  
 But God's Grace has missioned me

To scatter the seeds of truthful living  
 Among the hypocrites' hearts,

Alchemise and make them experience  
 The Life Divine here and now.

Yet he had to realise at last people — including many of his immediate disciples — were not as yet ready for the quantum leap that would change the current egoistic mentality swearing by division and separativity and enacting iniquity and misery into a new consciousness that would be wedded to the true Light and practise compassion and

grace. The average run of humanity still wanted short-cuts and miraculous mumbo-jumbo, and not the bigger change and spiritual transformation. Rāmalinga Svāmi therefore decided to withdraw from the scene. It is agreed that Rāmalinga entered his room about midnight on 30 January 1874, and was never seen again. When the room was opened days later, even his clothes had disappeared. During his last years he had often speculated and spoken on the ideal and actual possibility of physical transformation and immortality, and perhaps he had gone far in his sādhanā of change and transfiguration. Writing in 1930 Śrī Aurobindo made a pointed reference to Rāmalinga Svāmi: "There was a Yogi sometimes ago in this region who thought it, but he hoped when the change was complete, to disappear in Light." Did Rāmalinga at last merge in the Arut-perum-Jyōti — the Great Effulgence — which in his last days he had invoked so often:

Earnestly I sought from you  
The Elixir of Immortality:

Give it now;

Else You'll be blamed  
For the loss of my life:

Tell me, my Lord,  
Whether You want the blame or me.

In one of the verses in his final song Anubhava-Mālai, Rāmalinga almost makes a quick summary of his life:

In my nonage He made me indite songs  
In praise of His holy feet;

He dismissed my numerous transgressions  
As youthful frivolities;

The great Dancer-King took me in marriage  
And wholly mingled in me.

How may I find words to describe the bliss  
Of this ecstatic union?

It is a condition of blessedness  
Decreed by the Grace Divine.

The verse that by tradition was the very last uttered by him may serve as his requiem:

People praised me as I blabbed in my folly,  
Yet You gave all I desired;

Banishing all fear, I feed on nectar,  
And a blissful sleep in mine.

It was a particular kind of Light — liberating, light-giving, love-radiating — that Valladār Rāmalinga Svāmi invoked in our midst, particularly at a time of heavy mist and darkness, and over one hundred years after his passing, that Light burns brighter than ever.